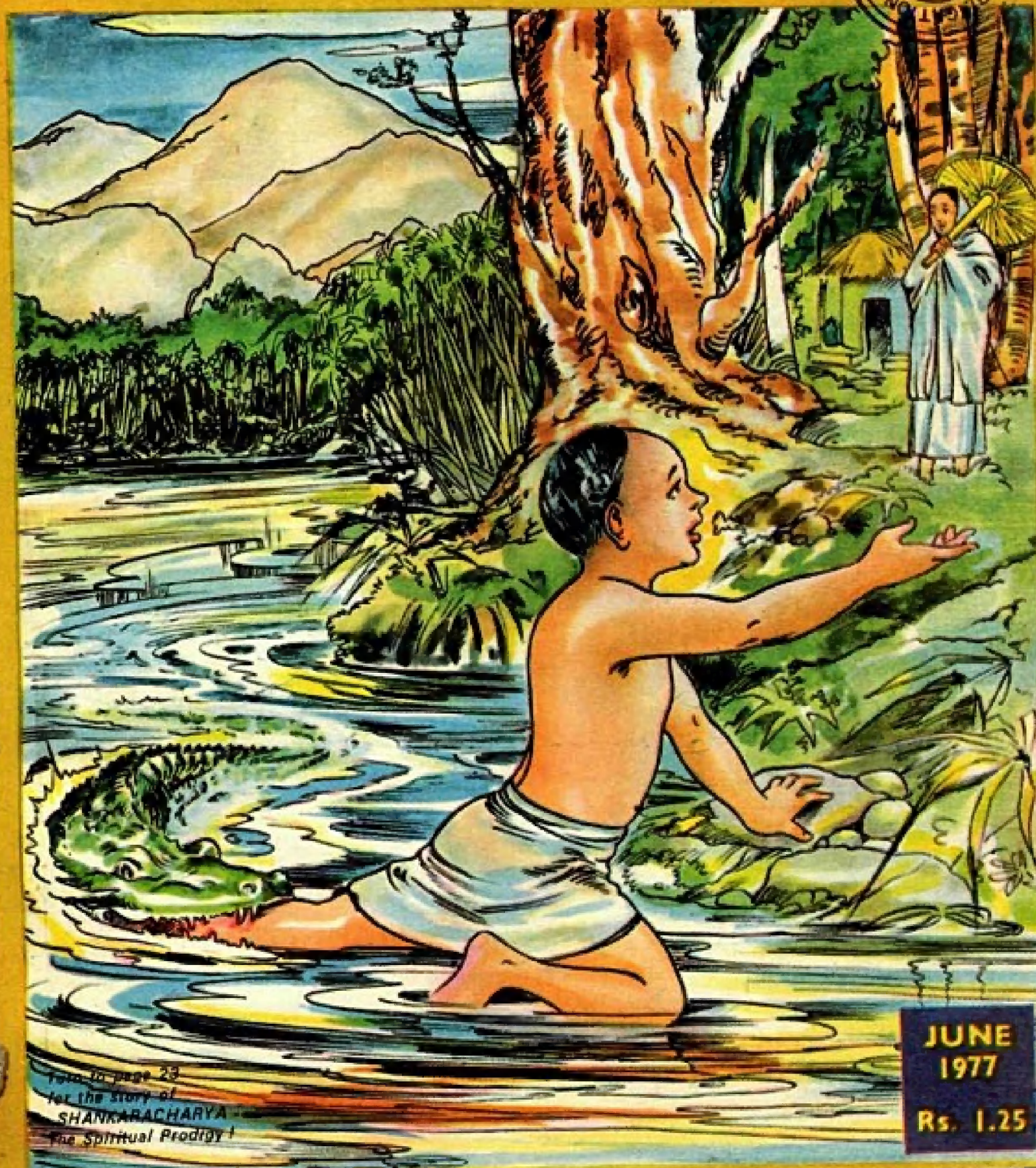


CHANDAMAMA



Turn to page 28
for the story of
SHANKARACHARYA
The Spiritual Prodigy!

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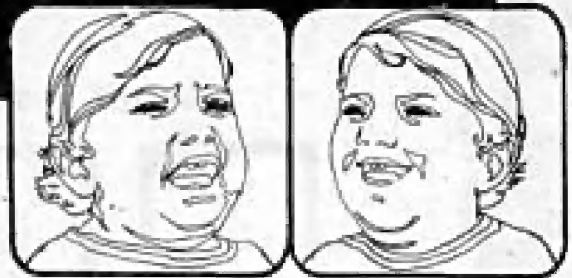
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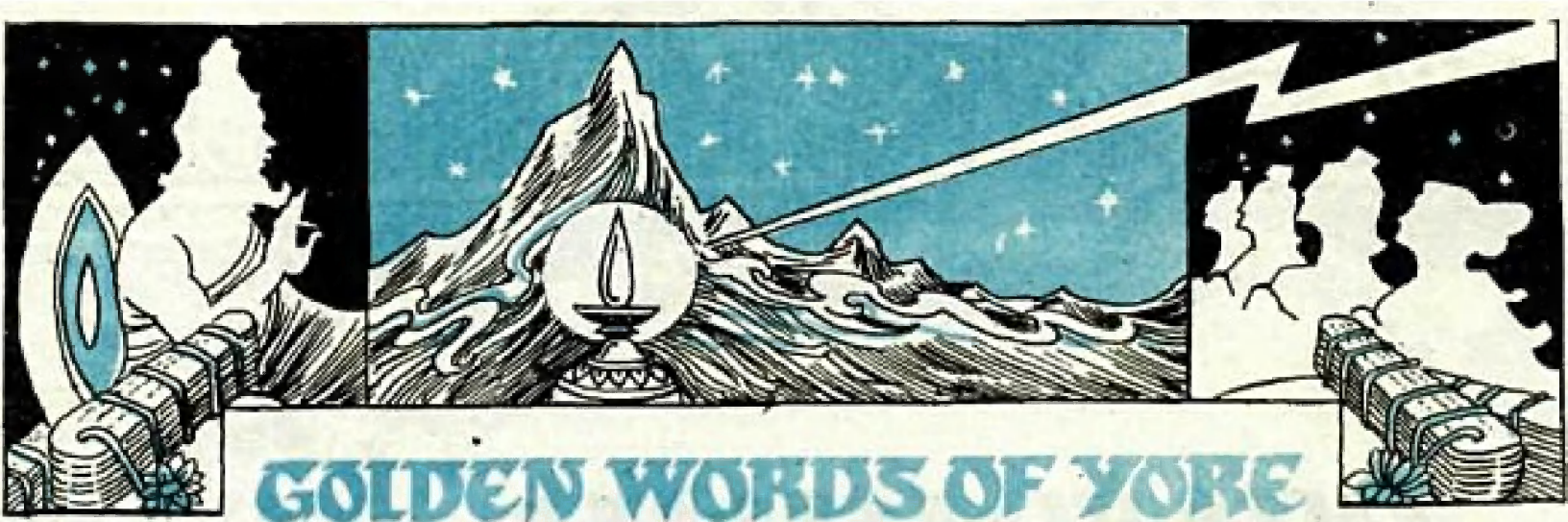
THE PRODIGY

Is genius only one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration—as some people would like us to believe? That may be true—or partly true—in many cases, but certainly not in all cases. At least the phenomenon of prodigy does not allow us to accept the statement as entirely true.

Take the case of Mozart. The minuets (music for a certain graceful form of dance) he composed at the age of four are still considered masterly pieces. By that age he could not have perspired much to develop his genius! At ten, Beethoven composed pieces which were published and practised by established musicians of the time.

They are called prodigies. A prodigy is a child of genius who causes great wonder. One of the most astounding examples of prodigy was Christian Heinrich Heineken (1721–1725) of Lubeck. It is said that he could talk when he was a few hours old! If this is exaggeration, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* reports that "he was able to speak at the age of ten months". At three years, he could explain many difficult issues and solve problems before scholarly gatherings. Thousands flocked to see him. He was received by the King of Denmark. But soon thereafter he fell sick. Perhaps he had hoped to meet some wise men of his level at the royal court. But he was disappointed. He died at four, bored with life because he had no equal to talk to!

The young Shankaracharya too had hardly an equal to talk to. But this spiritual prodigy of India had a mission to fulfil. He lived till it was fulfilled and perhaps not a day more!



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।
अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥

*Dambho darpobhimānaśca krodhaḥ pāruṣyameva ca
Ajñānam cābhijātasya pārtha sampadamāsurīm*

O Partha ! Arrogance, pride, vanity, anger, rudeness and foolishness are the characteristics of a man of demoniac nature.

The Gita

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च जना न विदुरासुराः ।
न शौचं नापि चाचारो न सत्यं तेषु विद्यते ॥

*Pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca janā na vidurāsurāḥ
Na śaucam nāpi cācāro na satyam teṣu vidyate*

Men of demoniac nature know not what is desirable and from what to abstain. In them are found neither purity, nor good conduct nor any regard for truth.

The Gita

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

*Trividham narakasyedam dvāram nāśanamātmanah
Kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhastasmādetattrayaṁ tyajet*

Three are the gateways of hell, responsible for bringing about the spirit's ruination: lust, anger and greed.

The Gita

THE DAKSHA YAJNA

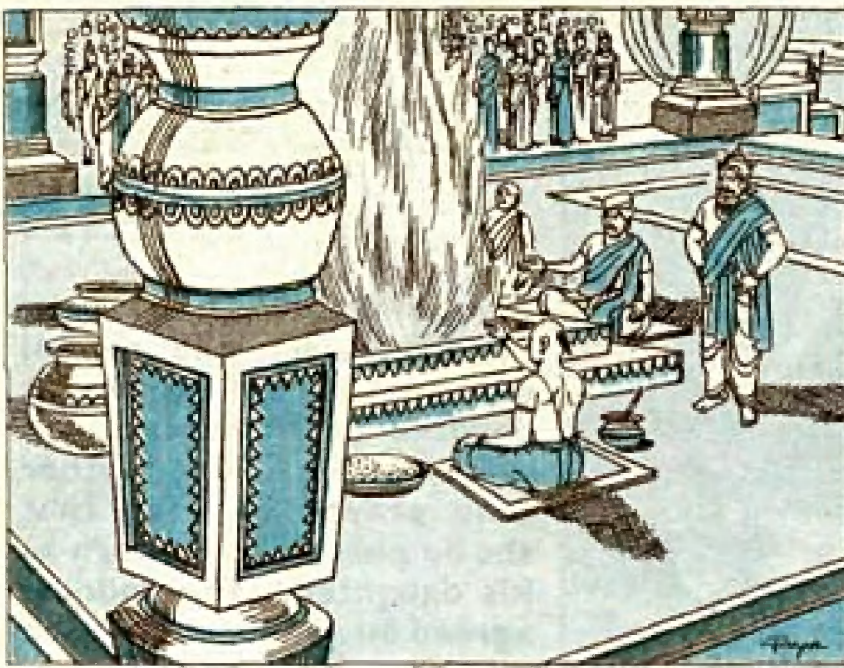
Long, long ago, Kankhol, near Haridwar, was the capital of a king named Daksha. A devotee of Mahamaya—an aspect of the Divine Mother—he prayed to Her that she be pleased to be born as his daughter. The goddess agreed on condition that on

having Her as his daughter, he should not forget that She was Divine.

Mahamaya was duly born as one of Daksha's fifty daughters and was named Sati. But an erring human being that Daksha was, he forgot that she was an incarnation of the Divine Mother. Sati, however, passed most of her time in meditation.



Daksha did not hide his displeasure when Sati expressed her desire to marry Shiva. But the gods intervened and the marriage was performed. Sati left her father's palace to live with Shiva on Mount Kailash.



Some time later, King Daksha performed a great *Yajna*. All his daughters and their husbands, except Sati and Shiva, were invited. They came with great pomp and show. Daksha was very proud of them.

When, on Mount Kailash, Sati heard of the *Yajna*, she grew eager to proceed to her father's house. Shiva tried to dissuade her saying that she had not been invited. But Sati's contention was that the doors of a father's house was always open for a daughter.



With Shiva's consent Sati appeared at Daksha's house with great love for her parents and sisters. But looking at her hermitess-like dress, Daksha grew furious. He went on uttering abuses against Shiva, despite Sati's repeated pleading not to do so.

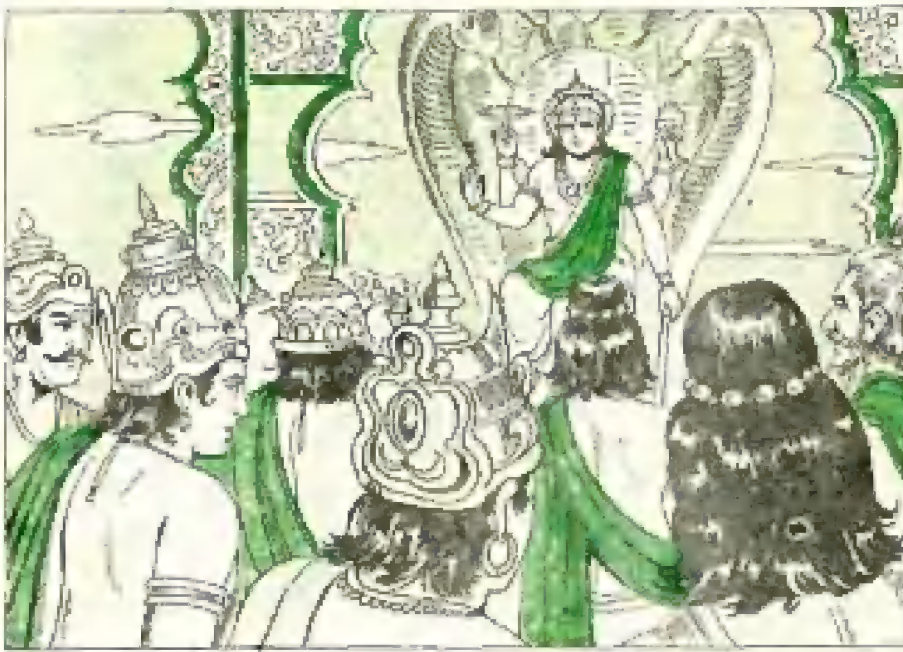
Unable to bear the abuses heaped on Shiva, Sati fell down, dead. Sati's bodyguards, some ghosts, ran to inform Shiva of this sad happening. Shiva stood up, trembling with fury. He then plucked a lock of his hair and dashed it on the ground.



Instantly innumerable ghosts, ghouls and other weird creatures emerged from the ground. They ran to Daksha's palace where they wrought havoc. What was a festive place a minute ago, became as quiet as a sepulchre.

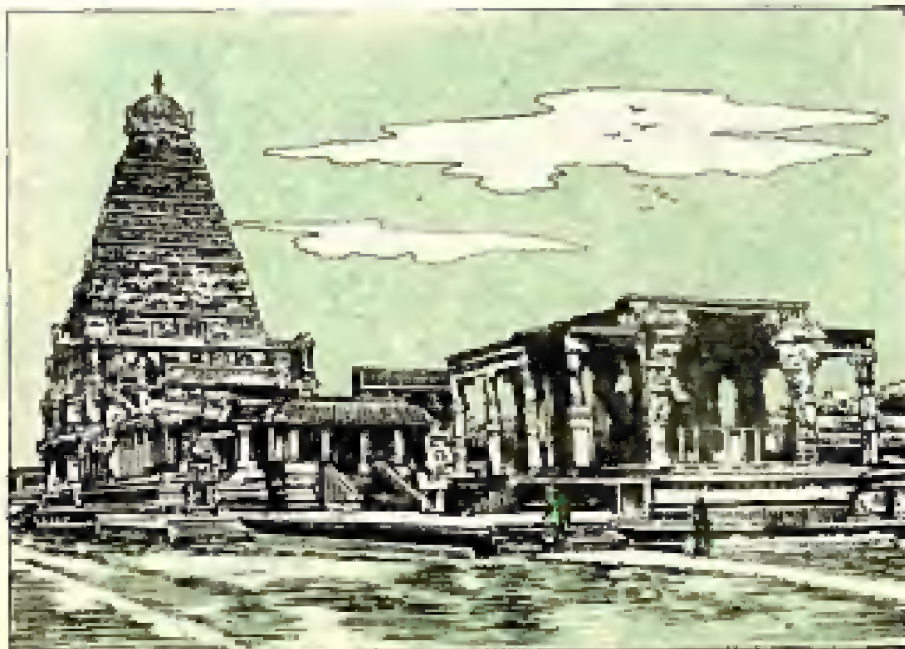
Soon Shiva too arrived on the spot. Struck with infinite sorrow he picked up Sati's deadbody. Carrying it on his shoulder, he danced a dance of wrath which could have shaken the world to its end.





But that must not happen. The gods and the rishis prayed to Vishnu for His intervention. Vishnu sent His *Sudarshana Chakra*, the divine disk, to do the needful.

The *Chakra* began cutting the deadbody of Sati into pieces and the limbs got thrown off to distant places. They lay scattered in fifty-one different places all over India. As the deadbody was gone, Shiva slowly calmed down.



Wherever fell a limb of Sati, the place became a *pitha*, a holy place of worship. Through the ages the people of India have looked upon their land as sacred because the body of the Divine Mother has intermingled with its earth.



LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

The Saga of Sri Jagannath

A bright young traveller once lost his way in a forest. Some of the forest-dwellers led him to the presence of their chief, Viswavasus.

Upon knowing that the traveller was a Brahmin and that he was an emissary of the mighty king Indradyumna, Viswavasus welcomed him and offered him his hospitality.

The Brahmin, Vidyapati, was charmed by the kindness of Viswavasus, the chief of the Sabara tribe. Within a few days of his stay with the chief, Vidyapati felt that his host was more a yogi than a ruler. Long before the sunrise, everyday, Viswavasus went out of his house, to return an hour or so

after the sunrise. Everybody knew that he went to worship his deity, but nobody knew where the deity was. It was forbidden to ask the chief about it. He alone had been shown the site by his father—and his father by his predecessor. The secret worship had been in vogue for generations.

Viswavasus had nobody as near one in the world except his young daughter, Lalita. She was as sweet as Vidyapati was wise. Viswavasus, who had been much impressed by the learning and the personal conduct of his guest, though it fit to give his daughter in marriage to him. No doubt, both Vidyapati and Lalita were delighted



at the wise Viswavasu's decision.

Vidyapati continued to live there happily after his marriage. But at times as though he was transported to some faraway land in his dream. He alone knew that he could never be in peace until the mission with which he had set out was fulfilled.

"Who is the secret deity whom your father worships? I feel a great urge to see Him!" one day Vidyapati confided to Lalita. Lalita, in her turn pleaded with her father to grant her husband the privilege of a glimpse of the deity.

It was a request which Viswa-

vasu would have turned down. But he had a second thought. After all, it will be Vidyapati who will continue the tradition of the secret worship after him. Why not satisfy the young man's urge now?

Even then Vidyapati was not allowed to see the zigzag way that went to the place of worship. He was led there blindfolded. But the clever young man had managed to scatter a handful of mustard seeds along his way.

His eyes were uncovered right in front of the deity, known as Nilamadhav. We do not know what he saw, but he fell into a trance. He realised, in the core of his heart, that his mission had been partly fulfilled. Great was his joy, although he did not give vent to it.

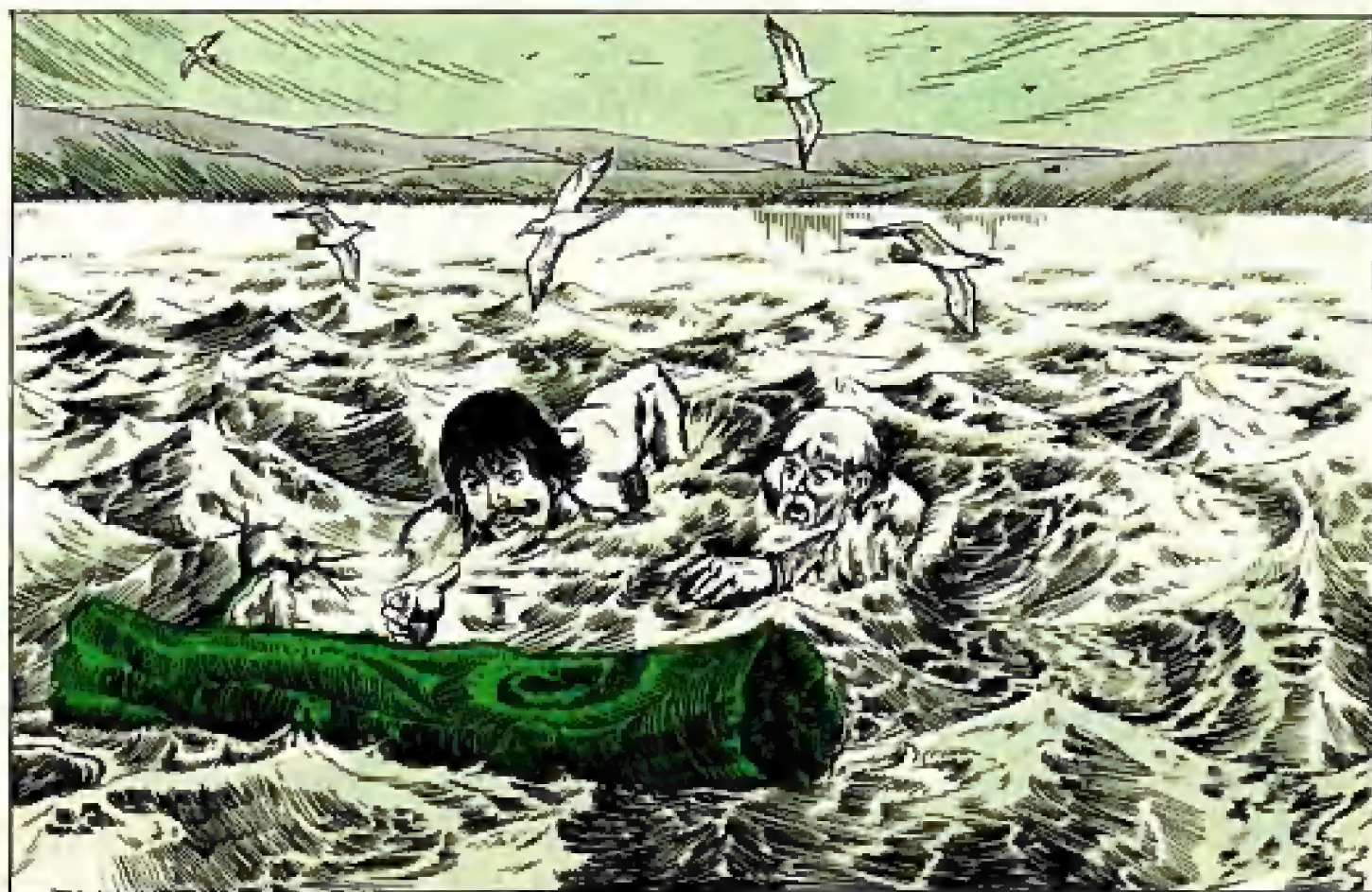
Now it was time for him to execute the other part of his mission. He could hardly pay attention to any work thereafter. Sleep did not visit him at night. There was a storm in his mind. His heart was split between two loyalties.

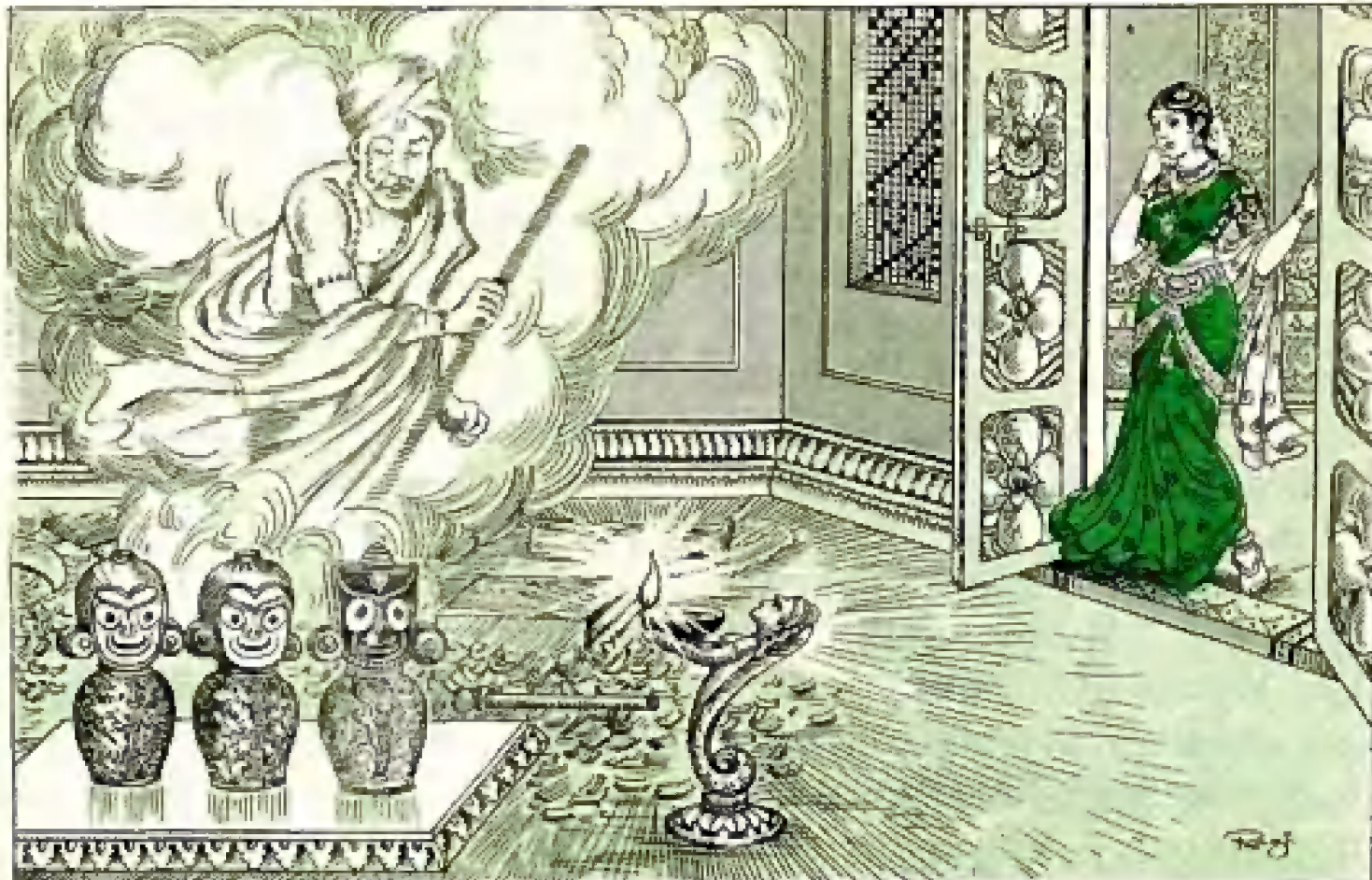
At last he decided to be loyal to his king who had entrusted him with the difficult task. The king, Indradyumna, had built a majestic temple at Puri. In his

dream he had been informed of the presence of Krishna somewhere in the interior of the forest-clad hilly regions of Kalinga. His chosen emissaries—men with some inner vision and feeling—had gone out in four directions in search of the mysterious presence. It was Vidyapati to whose lot the boon of the discovery had fallen!

It was an extremely painful step; but Vidyapati took it. He left Viswavasū's house. Monsoon had arrived and the mustard seeds had been transformed into tiny sprouts. Vidyapati found his way into the cave, stole the deity and hurried to Puri.

What Vidyapati carried to Puri was perhaps the sacred relic of Krishna. The relic was to be contained in a new image that was to be installed in the temple. The log out of which the image was to be carved was floating in the sea and King Indradyumna had been told about its situation in his dream. But it was difficult to bring the log ashore. It could be seen riding the high waves, but as soon as the king's men approached it, it receded far into the sea. Efforts to tackle it continued for a long time, with the king himself participating. But all was in vain.





The remorseful king sat in meditation. Only then it was revealed to him that deep inside the forest, the Lord's devotee, Viswavasud, was lying heartbroken at the loss of his deity. The king apologised to Viswavasud and entreated him to come down to Puri. As soon as Viswavasud and the king joined hands in trying to bring the log ashore, it came easily.

Out of the log was to be carved the image of the deity. It was not the work of any ordinary craftsman. He alone could do it who had had the inspiration or the vision of the deity's form. None of the

gifted artists or masons or sculptors of the king came forward to take up the work. When the king was growing impatient, an old man appeared before him and offered to do it.

The old man seemed unable even to wield an instrument. But he claimed that he had the vision of the deity and that he could complete the work in three weeks provided no one disturbed him even for a moment.

The king agreed to take a chance. The old man was interned in a room with the sacred log. Days passed and the king and the queen eagerly waited for the period of three

weeks to be over. In the meanwhile they were satisfied with the continuous sound of the wood being chiselled and polished.

A fortnight passed. The queen, alone, had one day pressed her ear against the door of the old man's room to hear the familiar sound. But all was silent. Suddenly a doubt crept into her mind: wasn't the man too old? Who knew what had happened to him?

She pushed the door open. The old man looked back and vanished the next moment. He had carved not one but three images out of the log—of Krishna, His brother Balarama, and Their sister, Subhadra.

But the images were incomplete. The mysterious old man

was Viswakarma, the sculptor-architect of heaven.

The Krishna of Puri is known as Sri Jagannath—the Lord of the Universe. The world-famous annual Car Festival of Puri which occurs in June-July, draws tens of thousands of devotees from all parts of the country. The deities are taken out of the great temple in three magnificent *Rathas* or cars to another temple, marking Krishna's journey to Mathura.

Though Viswavasud was not a Brahmin, he became a priest of Sri Jagannath. That shows that in India of bygone days caste did not stand in the way of one's spiritual aspiration.

Viswavasud's descendants are still there, continuing the tradition.



THE KIND-HEARTED LANDLORD!

In a certain village lived a landlord. People spoke of him as a rich and an influential man. But that did not satisfy him. He wanted everybody to praise him as a kind-hearted man. He had lately taken into employment a young man from some far away village. The young man, named Babla, was a talkative fellow. Babla was in charge of the landlord's four cows. He led them to the fields in the morning and brought them back in the evening.

One day the landlord instructed two of his servants to drive away one of the cows to another farm house while Babla would be having a nap in the field. The servants did as instructed. Babla returned weeping with three cows and reported the loss of a cow to his master.

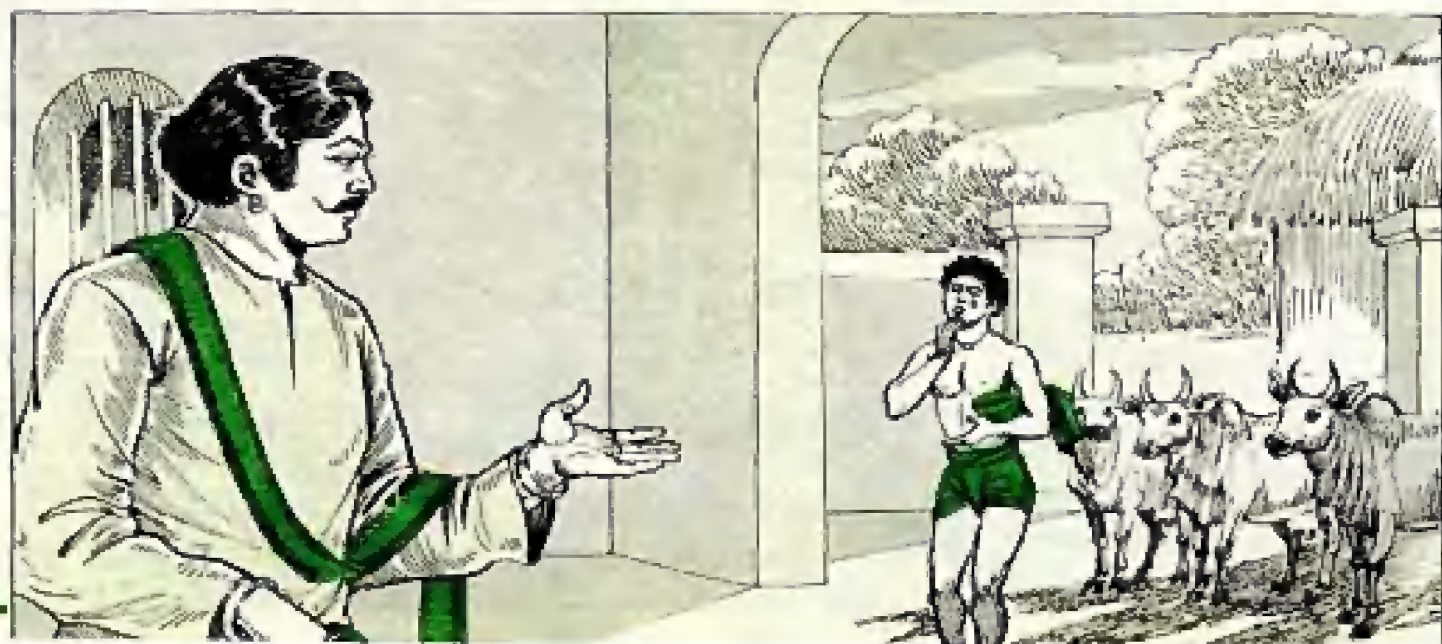
"Never mind, Babla, I don't blame you for the loss," said the landlord.

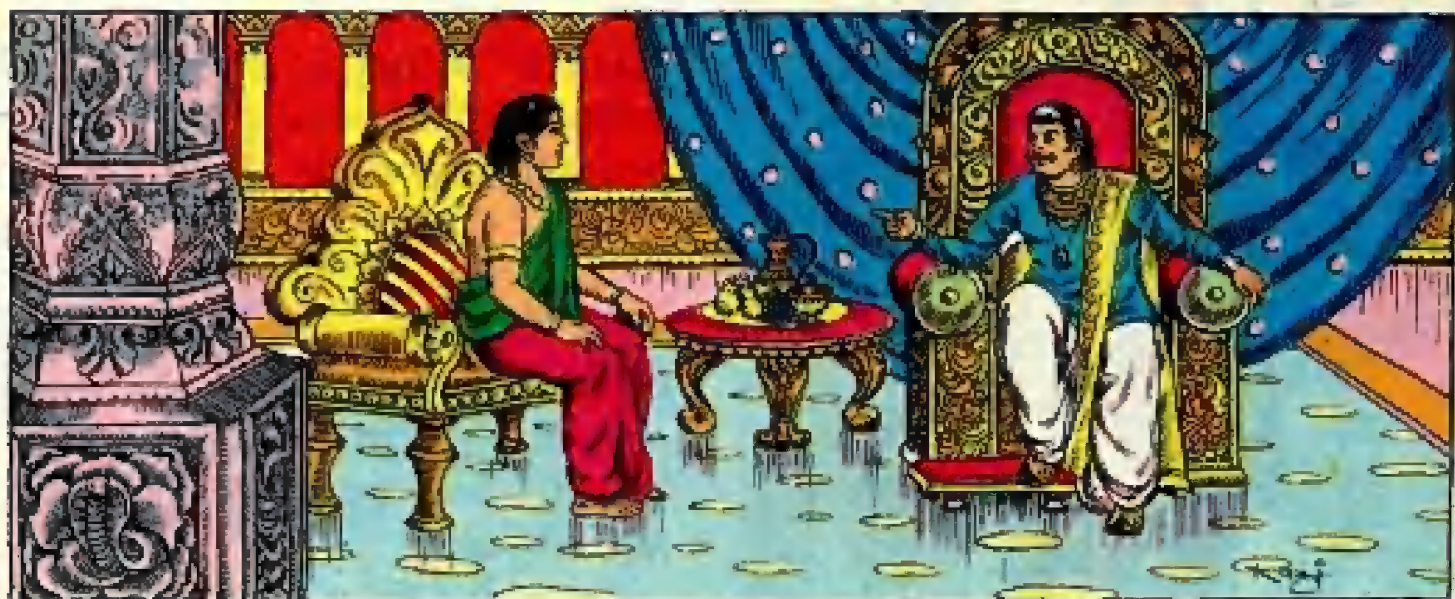
Overjoyed, the talkative Babla told everybody, "What a kind-hearted man my master is!" The landlord heard this and was happy.

Next day, at the landlord's instruction, yet another cow was led away from the field. In the evening, the landlord again consoled the weeping Babla, saying, "What if a few cows are stolen? I am not going to punish you!"

Next day, Babla returned without any cow and said tearfully that the remaining two cows too were gone! The landlord was taken aback, for he had known nothing about it.

Babla slipped away at night and led the two cows to his own village.





THE UNFINISHED PAINTING

Once upon a time there was a king who was a great patron of art. He had in his court a highly gifted artist.

"Can you draw a very special picture for me? It should show the Divine child, Krishna, face to face with the cruel Kamsa. I wish to see the very symbol of innocence and bliss side by side with the very symbol of crookedness and cruelty," one day the king told the artist.

The idea was quite inspiring to the artist too. "My lord, I will do all I can to satisfy you. But you must allow me enough time to complete the work," he said.

"Take as much time as necessary, but draw a masterpiece,"

was the king's instruction.

The artist decided to draw first the picture of Krishna. "There should be so many beautiful boys in this town of ours. I must find out the most charming one of them to serve as the model for my Krishna," he decided.

The artist spent long hours wandering about in the town every day looking for the right model. He visited a number of schools and stood before such parks and playgrounds where children in large number gathered. He watched them with great interest. Many of them attracted his attention. While some looked intelligent, some others looked graceful.



But it was the goal of the artist to meet a boy who must have combined in his face both the traits.

After a patient search for a full year, one day the artist chanced to see a child playing on the bank of a river, in front of a small hut. While wit glittered in the child's eyes, his face was as delicate as a rose. He smiled bewitchingly.

"Here is the perfect model for the divine child Krishna," said the artist. He met the child's father and obtained his consent to his proposal. Everyday the royal coach picked up the child from his hut and left at the

artist's. After a sitting for a couple of hours, the coach brought the child back to his hut.

It took a fortnight for the artist to complete his portrayal of Krishna. The artist bestowed several gifts on the child before bidding him goodbye after the last sitting.

Now began a new phase of the artist's quest. He must find someone to serve as his model for the depiction of Kamsa on the canvas. He resumed wandering in the streets. This time he frequented such areas of the town which were notorious as the haunts of hooligans, cheats and murderers. He observed a number of men who looked aggressive and cruel. However, he was not satisfied that any of them would serve his purpose.

But the artist's quest came to an abrupt end because the king died all of a sudden. The prince who ascended the throne was no doubt an able and good-natured young man, but he had no particular love for art. Our artist lost interest in his work lamenting his patron's death.

Years passed. The artist, who had grown old, was elevated to the position of a minister. One day the king

paid a visit to the prison accompanied by all his ministers. As they passed by the row of cabins casting hurried looks at the prisoners, the artist's attention was arrested by a ghastly figure, a prisoner whose look made his blood creep!

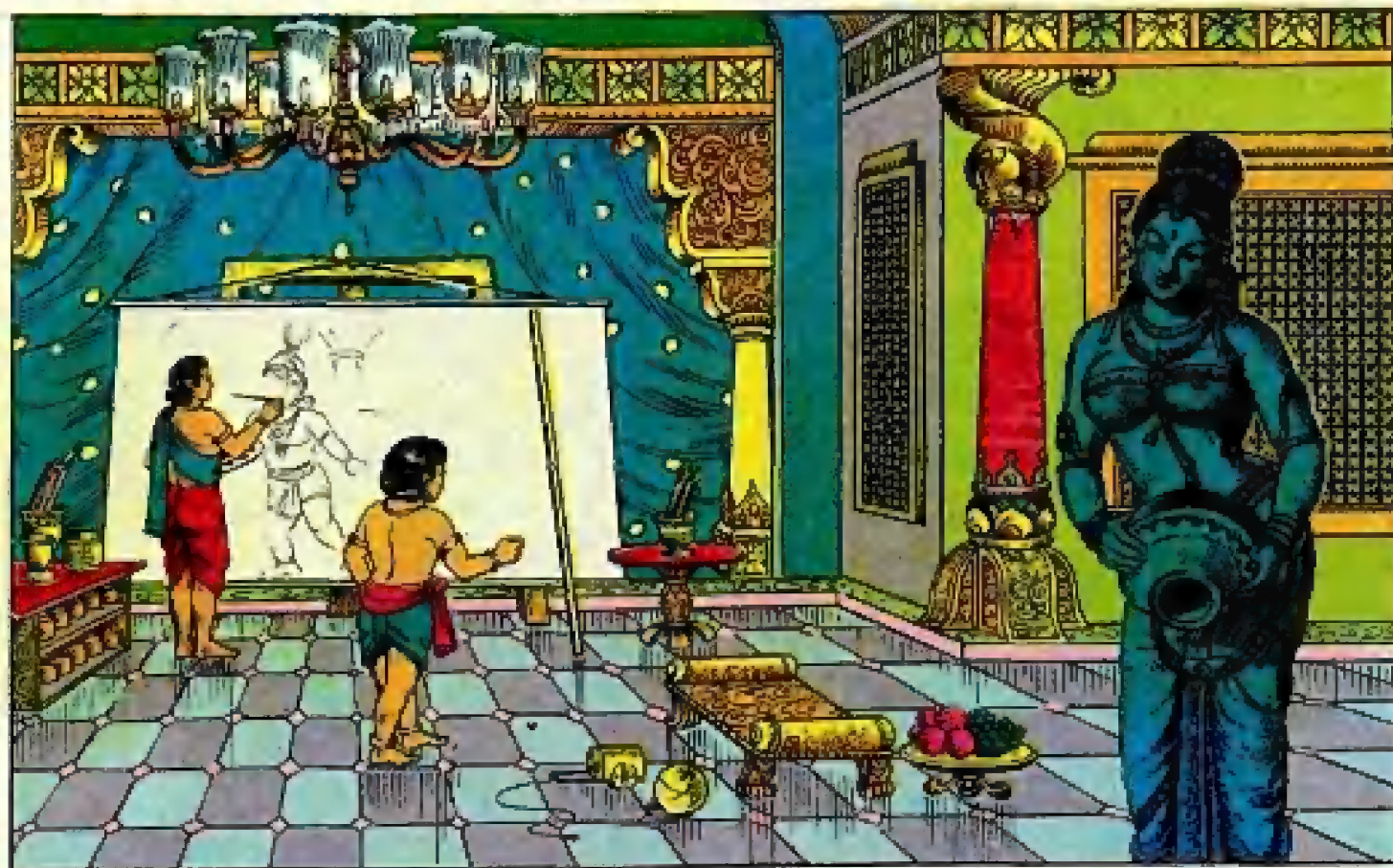
Instantly the artist remembered his unfinished painting. "I've got my model!" he exclaimed.

"What model?" enquired the king. The artist told him about the late king's unfulfilled wish and said, "My lord! If you allow this prisoner to be brought to my house for an hour or two everyday, I can draw the figure

of Kamsa and complete the painting in a fortnight."

The artist's request was granted. Next day the prisoner was taken to the artist's house under the prison-guards' escort. The artist made him sit in a chair and brought out his unfinished painting. After he had dusted it, he picked up his brush and, ready to apply the first dab to the canvas after twentyfive years, cast a glance at the prisoner's face.

But he was taken aback. The eyes of the prisoner which earlier sparkled with hatred and looked red with venom were now full of tears which flowed down his cheeks!



"What is the matter with you?" asked the artist, laying down his brush.

"You don't recognise me, do you? Well, there is nothing unnatural in that. I have reduced myself to the devil of a man. But twentyfive years ago, when I was a child, you had chosen me as your model for drawing the picture of Krishna on this very canvas!" said the prisoner and covered his face with his palms.

"What! Is it you who were my model for Krishna?" exclaimed the artist. "What has become of you?"

"I fell into bad company and by and by started doing most heinous things. Soon I became the terror of the town and I can tell you that I have set records in the commitment of every kind

of crime!" answered the prisoner and then he added, "My deeds and thoughts have left their mark on my face!"

The old artist stood speechless. A long time passed. He kept his canvas back on his rack.

"Are you not going to draw today?" asked the prisoner, wiping his eyes.

The artist walked on to the prisoner, embraced him and said, "Neither today nor ever. Your eyes are no more the same. Your tears have washed away the traits for which I had chosen you as my model. And I am sure, those ugly traits will never return to your eyes, now that you have seen your childhood portrait, your true self! Let the painting remain unfinished. I am not at all sorry for that!"



SHANKARACHARYA - The Spiritual Prodigy

A boy of eight was swimming in the river Churna that flowed by the village Kaladi of Kerala. The fond mother, seated on the bank, was watching her only child.

"Mother! I'm afraid, a crocodile has caught me by my leg!" the boy shouted all of a sudden.

The panic-struck mother stood up and cried for help. But not a soul was to be found nearby.

"Mother! The crocodile is trying to pull me away. Only God can save me, provided you offer me to Him," said the boy again, struggling to keep his head over the water.

The crocodile's tale once dazzled like a sword and the mother noticed it. There was no time to lose. She cried out, "Let it be so, my son. I dedicate yourself to God. Henceforth I've no claim on you!"

The crocodile instantly let go the boy and turned and sped away, as the numerous whirls and ripples on the water sugges-

ted. The boy swum ashore and emerged without any hurt. With a serene smile he told his mother, "Great is your sacrifice, mother, and great is my joy. Now I belong to God. I must forthwith take to the street in search of a guru who will show me the right path to God."

The mother, Aryamba, embraced the boy. She and her husband, Sivaguru, knew pretty well that theirs was no ordinary child. In fact, after years of prayer to Lord Shankara the child had been granted to them as a boon. Hence he bore the name Shankara. Astrologers, and others who had intuition, knew that the child was an emanation of the Lord. Sooner or later the boy would take to a path different from those taken by the ordinary men of the world.

But it came rather too soon, when the child, after his miraculous escape from the crocodile, declared that he was determined to become an ascetic. It was very painful even for

an enlightened mother like Aryamba to bear the separation. But Shankara stuck on to his decision.

The wandering boy, led by his inner vision, met his mentor, Govinda, on the bank of the river Narmada. The guru gave initiation to the boy and Shankara became a full-fledged sannyasin.

They were not good days for India. There were numerous temples and muths, but those who thrived on them were not spiritual seekers, but corrupt priests and vainglorious pedants. Great Vedic truths had been

reduced to lifeless rituals.

The young Shankara, with his guru's blessings, stormed into this world of priests and scholars to cry a halt to their falsehood. He stressed the oneness of God, as earlier propounded by the Vedanta. He claimed that he could condense to a few words the wisdom of innumerable texts, and this is what he had to say: Brahma alone is real, the universe is illusion; *Jiva* and Brahma are not disparate.

Shankara, followed by a few disciples, toured the length and breadth of the country. Great



scholars bowed down to him—a mere teenager. Wisdom and arguments flowed from him with charming lucidity, but with great force. Many genuine seekers became his disciples, but he incurred the wrath and jealousy of some too. Once while he sat in deep meditation in a camp in Maharashtra, a *Kapalika* who was perhaps following him for some time, stealthily entered his room. Observing that there was nobody nearby, he aimed his axe at Shankara's neck.

In the meanwhile Shankara's dear disciple, Padmapada, who was on his way to the river, had

a strong premonition that his guru's life was in danger. He hurried to the camp.

When Shankara opened his eyes he saw the luminous form of Narasimha—the Man-Lion Incarnation of Vishnu who had killed Hiranyakashyipu—enveloping Padmapada. Beside Padmapada lay the *Kapalika*, dead.

Padmapada had reached the camp in time to save his guru by killing the *Kapalika*, just when the latter was going to kill Shankara. But he did not know what he had done. It was as though the spirit of



Narasimha, taking possession of him, had accomplished the task.

Shankara, now famous as Shankaracharya, established four permanent centres for the teaching of his philosophy and for providing shelter to the sannyasins of his order. They were at Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri and Sringeri. He is believed to have founded a fifth centre at Kanchi.

Shankara had been last seen at Kanchi. But some say that he passed away while he was at one of the holy spots in


the Himalayas—Kedarnath or Badrinath. His end is thus shrouded in mystery. He had been only 32 when he disappeared.

Even the time when he lived is not above dispute. It is believed that he belonged to 5th century B.C. But some scholars trace him to a time few centuries later.

The institutions Shankara had founded are still there. His philosophy has exercised a great influence on the Indian mind through the ages.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

THE VACILLATING PRINCE

The night was dark but for intermittent flashes of lightning. There was no sound save the roar of the thunder and the moaning howl of the jackals and, of course, the weird laughter of the spirits.

King Vikram climbed the tree and brought down the corpse. Then, as he resumed his journey through the deserted cremation ground, the vampire that had possessed the corpse observed, "O King, you are no doubt a brave man. But a brave man is not necessarily a man with a decisive mind. Take the case of Amar, the vacillating prince of Avanti. Well, let me narrate to you an episode from his life. Listen with attention. A story should give you some relief."

The vampire went on:- Long long ago, the land of Avanti was encircled by deep forests. In a part of the forest at the frontier of the land lived a tribe of jungle-dwellers. They had no



link with the world outside the forest. They lived freely with the wild animals, following their own laws and customs.

They had a chief whom they obeyed as the people of Avanti obeyed their king.

The prince of Avanti, Amar, was very fond of hunting and adventure. He loved to penetrate alone into the difficult regions of the forest. Strong and courageous, he could fight with a tiger or a boar single-handed if necessary. He had tamed a number of tigers and lions too.

One day, while chasing a prey, he entered an area of the

forest which he had not visited before. The area abounded in fruits and flowers. Sweet brooks and rivulets flowed through it.

Desiring to further explore the area, Prince Amar advanced far into the forest. By evening he found himself near a tribal hamlet. He was amazed to see a young girl playing with a number of tiger cubs. What struck him with wonder was not the valour of the girl, but the fact that she looked so beautiful without a single ornament on her person and in the most plain and simple dress.

After a while, raising her head, the girl too saw the prince. She had never seen a man from outside her tribe, what to speak of a prince.

She got up and ran to inform her people about the stranger. The prince followed her. The girl happened to be the daughter of the tribal chief, a princess by her own right. Soon a number of people surrounded both the tribal princess and Prince Amar. The chief too came out of his house and was surprised to see Amar.

"I am Prince Amar, the son of the King of Avanti," Amar introduced himself. The chief welcomed him with kind words.

After some time, Amar expressed before the chief his desire to marry the tribal princess.

"You can marry her only if you fulfil a certain condition," he was told.

"I am most willing to try," said Amar.

In the morning Amar was led to an open ground at the centre of the hamlet. A crowd of tribal people had already gathered there. A strong and ferocious-looking man came out of the crowd.

"O Prince! You must defeat this man in a wrestle if you are to win my daughter's hand," said the chief.

"But why? Is brute force the only virtue to be considered in a suitor?" demanded Amar.

"Well, Prince, we cannot do away with our age-old custom. If you do not wish to try your strength against this man, you can go away," said the chief.

The prince thought for a moment. Then he accepted the challenge. The wrestling began.

Soon the ferocious man threw Amar down. The crowd applauded their hero's feat. The tribal princess too clapped her hands.

Amar lay dazed for a moment. But he had realised that although his rival was quite strong, he was a tactless wrest-





ler. When the rival came closer to him to watch his condition, Amar sprang up and tripped him down, simultaneously planting such a strong blow on his chest that he lay, immobile like a broken pillar. A little later he was declared dead.

The crowd applauded Amar's success. The princess too clapped her hands.

"Well done, Prince Amar, you are the victor. We must arrange for the marriage without any delay," announced the chief.

"Thank you. But I have changed my mind. I do not wish to marry your daughter," announced Amar.

All stood stunned. Amar walked away. Soon he left the tribal hamlet behind him and headed towards Avanti.

Suddenly a group of tribal soldiers surrounded him. They were armed. Amar realised that it would be foolish to fight with so many.

Before he had asked them what their intention was, the tribal chief appeared and told him, "Prince Amar, I have something to tell you before you leave us. The youth who wrestled with you and was vanquished was the one who was to marry my daughter. According to our custom, he had defeated and killed all the other suitors. That is why I had been obliged to arrange for a wrestle between you two. This is all I had to tell you. You may go."

The soldiers made way for Amar. But Amar turned to the chief and said, "I am prepared to marry your daughter."

The chief's face brightened up. The marriage was duly performed. The prince left for Avanti, accompanied by his bride.

The vampire stopped for a moment and then asked in a challenging tone, "Tell me, O king Vikram, why did Amar refuse to marry the tribal prin-

cess although he had proposed the marriage himself? Was it because the princess clapped her hands when he was thrown down by her suitor? Why again did he change his mind and marry her? Was it because he was afraid of the chief and his armed soldiers? Answer, if you can. If you choose to keep mum knowing the answers, your head shall roll off your shoulders!"

Answered King Vikram: "The prince had lost interest in the marriage the moment he learnt that brute force was the sole quality one needed to win the princess. He fought nevertheless, lest the tribals should

think that he was a coward. The princess clapping her hands at his fall had nothing to do with his decision. The princess clapped her hands even when her tribal suitor was vanquished!

"Prince Amar changed his mind again and married the princess when he realised that otherwise she would remain unmarried. The one who had killed all other suitors and had proved himself eligible to marry her had been killed by him. Hence it was his duty to marry her." No sooner had the king finished giving his answers, than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip!





A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Raju was an honest officer of the king and the salary he received was enough for a comfortable living. But he lived in a posh area of the city. His neighbours were rich traders who lived in elegant buildings.

Raju's wife, Shrimati, was fascinated by the life-style of her rich neighbours. She too desired to have a horse carriage and a number of servants at her command and a well-decorated drawing room.

She tried to cut down the expenses of the household on several heads so that more could be spent on show. But the scheme was not successful. As she put forth more elegant show, people expected her to

be more hospitable. Women of the neighbourhood visited her more frequently and she had to spend more in entertaining them.

"Many of the king's officers live like nawabs. Obviously, they do not depend for their living on the paltry sum they receive as salary. If one desires to prosper, one ought to know how to make use of one's power and position and earn more. But, to my bad luck, you are far from being ambitious," Shrimati told her husband whenever she got a chance.

Raju could not withstand the pressure for long. He started receiving bribes. What he did with some hesitation at the

beginning, he did unashamedly as days passed. In two years he accumulated five lakhs of rupees.

Shrimati was very happy. They built three nice houses in different parts of the town. They occupied one of them and let out the other two.

"It is time you resigned your post and went into business," one day Shrimati advised her husband.

Accordingly Raju resigned his job. Around that time the king appointed a committee to go into the allegation of corruption against some officers. The committee began to assess the property of the officers in order to find out if anybody had more property than he could have had through lawful means.

Panciky at this, Raju prepared a false receipt showing that he had borrowed an amount

of five lakhs of rupees from a friend, Govind Seth, who was a money-lender by profession. He requested the Seth to keep the receipt in his file for the time being. If the committee asked him to explain how he built the houses, he could lead them to the Seth and show the receipt.

All on a sudden the Seth died. As he had no heir, the state took charge of his property. The king's officers examined the documents the late money-lender had kept. In the process they found the receipt tendered by Raju and asked him to return the money with the interest.

It was a bolt from the blue. Raju could not pay up the false loan. Consequently his houses went in auction.

Raju and Shrimati were on the street – reduced to a couple of paupers.





ROBINSON CRUSOE

"I was born in the year 1632 in the city of York, of a good family," says Robinson Crusoe at the beginning of his unusual story which, since its publication in 1719, has remained one of the most avidly read works of adventure.

As a child, Robinson Crusoe dreamt of the wonders of the sea and the far away countries. As a young man, at the earliest opportunity, he slipped away from home and sailed on a ship.

It was far from a smooth sailing. Crusoe and the rest in the ship had to go through a series of unwelcome adventures. They were captured and even enslaved by a gang of pirates. But the climax came where Crusoe was shipwrecked on a small island.

Crusoe alone survived the catastrophe. For him began a

new life. Luckily, he could carry a number of things from the ruined ship to the island. He found a house in a cave which he fortified against any possible danger. By and by he realised that he was the solitary human being on the island.

Years passed and Crusoe found no chance to return to his country. He raised a small menagerie and cultivated a plot of land with corns he had salvaged from the ship.

An exciting incident took place after twenty-four years. Crusoe says, "It happened one day, about noon, going towards my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand. I stood like one thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an apparition."

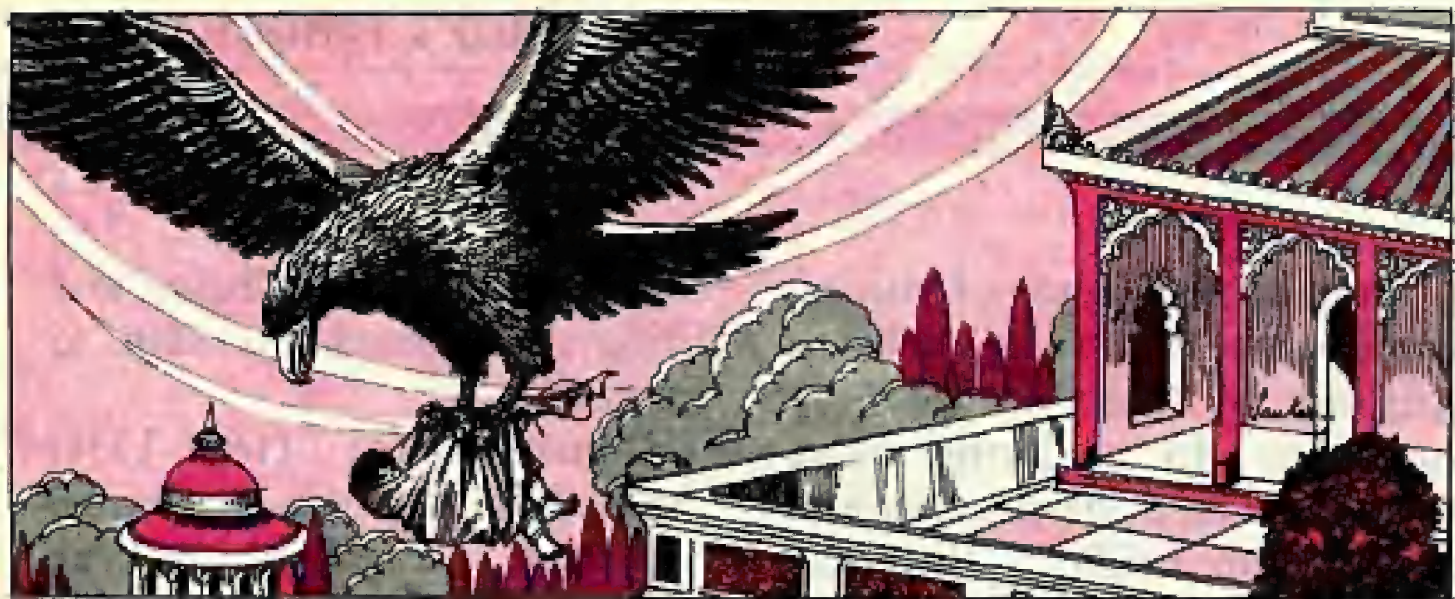
Soon he saw a gang of visiting cannibals about to kill a black prisoner of theirs for feasting on him. In a daring move Crusoe rescued the prisoner and named him Friday. With the passing of days Friday proved himself most faithful to Crusoe.

Another four years later, Crusoe had the opportunity to befriend a captain by helping him to recapture his ship from a group of mutineers. The grate-

ful captain carried Crusoe and Friday on board his ship to England.

Daniel Defoe (1661-1731) the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, had been inspired by the true adventure of a sailor named Alexander Selkirk. Selkirk, after a quarrel with his captain, insisted on being left on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez. He lived there, alone, for five years before being rescued by another captain.





The World of Magic

BHANUMATI'S TRICK

Hiradutta, the wealthy merchant of Vaishali, had no child. After he had performed a number of religious rites, his wife gave birth to a daughter.

The parents, naturally, were extremely fond of the daughter who was named Bhanumati. But their joy did not last. One day, when Bhanumati was a year old, her maids had put her in a swing in the garden. All on a sudden a vulture swooped down upon her and carried her away.

The maids raised a hue and cry; a number of men and women ran trying to keep pace with the vulture, but in vain. The vulture soon disappeared from their sight.

The vulture, alighted on a hill that stood at the centre of a forest and placed the child inside a cave. Days passed. The child grew up under the vulture's loving care.

The vulture in fact, was a nymph who was under a curse. In her lonely life, Bhanumati became the sole source of happiness. Other nymphs who came to see their friend taught Bhanumati all the arts.

Sixteen years passed. Bhanumati was now a beautiful damsel. One day the vulture changed into a nymph and told her, "My sweet daughter! The period I was doomed to live as a vulture is passed. I must return to my domain. You are beautiful

and you have mastered all the arts. I bless you and prophesy that soon you will be united with your parents. Even before that you would have got a worthy husband. Go westward."

The nymph disappeared. Although Bhanumati was sad at losing her companion and guardian, she was also happy that the nymph had at last been free from her curse.

As instructed by the nymph, Bhanumati descended from the hill and began walking westward. It took her a few days to cross the forest.

And, beyond the forest, she was amazed to see a grand

castle with its gates and doors wide open. She entered it and was further surprised to see all its inmates lying in a coma. Even the horses and elephants seemed to be in a swoon.

Bhanumati crossed several apartments of the castle and came to a room in which, on a bejewelled bed, slept a young man.

"This one must be the prince of this castle," said Bhanumati to herself. "But what has happened to all these people? Why are they all lying benumbed?"

Soon her attention went to a portrait that hung on the wall.



Bhanumati looked at the portrait and looked at the sleeping prince. She was certain that the picture was a portrait of the prince. But she marked that while the prince in the portrait was shown as wearing a glittering necklace, the real prince slept without it.

She felt that the absence of the necklace had something to do with the prince lying in that condition. She looked around and found a box at the feet of the prince. She opened it and therein found the necklace.

She picked up the necklace and touched it on the prince's forehead. The prince gave a start, though still asleep. Bhanumati understood that he will wake up once she put the necklace around his neck.

But her own clothes were soiled. She entered another apartment and chose some clothes for herself and went for a bath to a pool behind the castle. She planned to wake up the prince after she had finished taking bath and changing her clothes.

She was about to take a dip in the pool when she heard the voice of a woman, crying. She looked back and saw a hunchback walking by the bank of the

pool.

"Who are you? Why are you weeping?" Bhanumati asked.

"I've been thrashed by a rogue who had taken me for his wife. I do not know where to go," replied the woman.

Bhanumati, taking pity on her, said, "Don't you worry. I take you as my maid. Go to the castle yonder. Enter it. You will find a young man asleep in a room. Guard him and guard the necklace which I've kept on his bed. I will be there soon."

"I will do as you say," said the woman and she went away.

The woman entered the castle and before long was by the side of the prince. When she saw the necklace, she felt curious. She put it around the prince's neck, to see the fun.

Instantly the prince woke up. Along with him woke up all the inmates of the castle—and the animals too.

"Whoever you might be, if you are unmarried, I will marry you," announced the prince looking at the woman.

"I am unmarried and I am a princess," said the woman. "I've a maid who will be here soon."

Soon Bhanumati arrived on

the scene. "Here is my maid," said the woman pointing her finger at Bhanumati.

"What!" shouted Bhanumati, "Aren't you my maid? Had I not asked you to stand guard on the prince till I returned?"

Bhanumati then narrated to the prince all that had happened.

The prince believed Bhanumati. But Bhanumati herself would not be satisfied unless the woman confessed to her treachery. She told the woman, "I will write down, on a number of small slips of paper, 'Bhanumati is right'. On an equal or more number of papers

I will write down. 'The other woman is right'. You can mix up the papers. Then, with my eyes closed, I will pick up all such papers on which 'Bhanumati is right' was written. Will you speak out the truth if I succeed in doing this?"

"I will," replied the woman, who was already showing signs of nervousness.

The prince gave her a sheet of paper. Bhanumati first tore it into three equal parts. Then she made several small strips out of them. On some she wrote 'Bhanumati is right'. On the rest she wrote, 'The other woman is right'. She folded



all the strips and gave them to the woman who mixed them and put them in a box.

Bhanumati, her eyes closed, picked up, one after another, those papers which contained the words, 'Bhanumati is right'. The prince looked amazed.

The woman who thought that Bhanumati had much supernatural power, broke down and confessed that it was indeed she who was Bhanumati's maid and not the other way round.

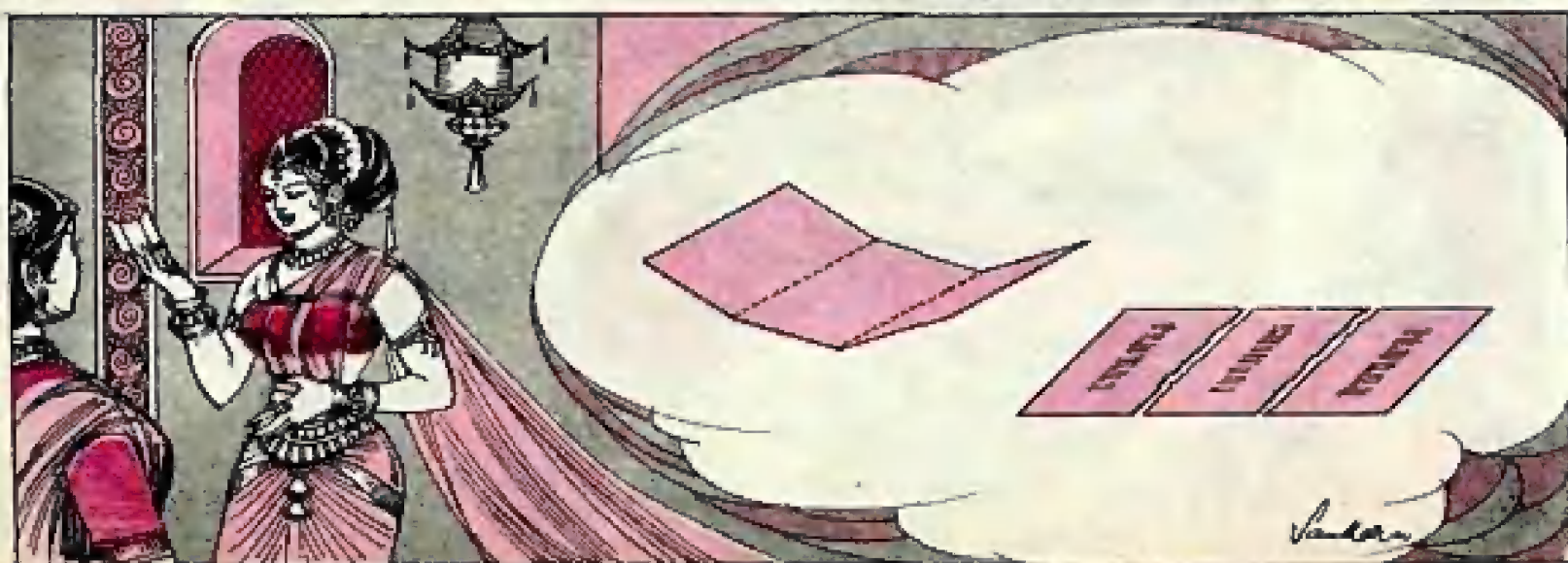
The delighted prince now proposed to marry Bhanumati. Messengers rushed to bring Bhanumati's parents there. Hiradutta's and his wife's joy knew no bound when they met their daughter after so many years. The marriage was a great event.

"My daughter, what was the trick in that magic you

showed?" Bhanumati's mother one day asked her.

"The sheet of paper the prince gave me had smooth edges. I made it into three long pieces. Then I made several strips out of the middle piece and wrote on them 'Bhanumati is right'! I folded each strip. But their edges were rough, being torn by hand. Strips made from the other two long pieces, upon which I wrote the other words, had a smooth edge each. With my hand I could feel which of the strips had rough edges on both the sides. I picked them up," answered Bhanumati and she added, "Although it was not quite necessary, I did so to make the woman herself confess the turth. I've retained her in my service, you know! And my husband knows everything, of course!"

—By A. C. Sorcer. Magician





TWO PREDICTIONS

On the sea was a village of the fishermen folk. One of the fishermen had a daughter named Chandra. "She is the only girl we know having the right name!" commented the villagers, for, Chandra was so beautiful!

Suraj was a young man of the village who had a great liking for Chandra. And, so far as we know, Chandra was no less fond of Suraj. Everybody was under the impression that the two will marry when the time comes.

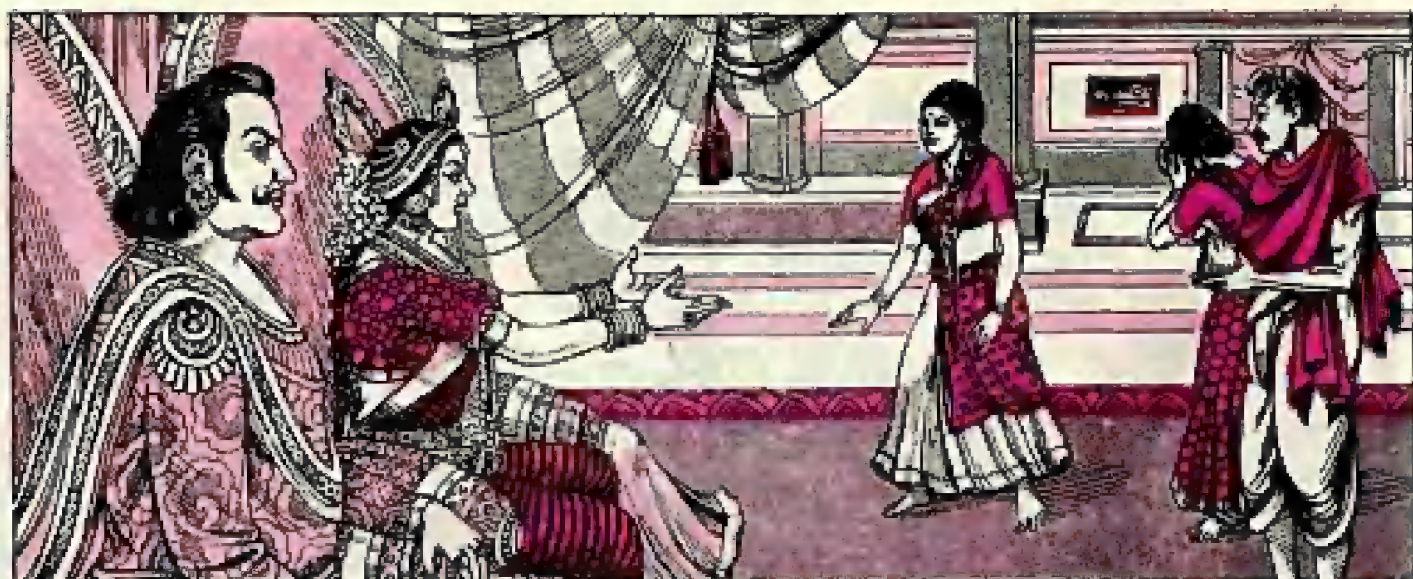
But, as the luck would have it, one day a palmist visited the village. He examined Suraj's palm and said, "You will get for your wife the girl you love!"

Suraj was very happy. In the evening he met Chandra's father and proposed the marriage.

"Suraj, I'm sorry, but there is no question of Chandra marrying you. A palmist has said this morning that Chandra is to become a queen!" said Chandra's father.

Suraj left the village in grief. He settled down in an island and did only enough work to sustain himself. A few months passed. One day he caught a fish and cut it to halves. Pop came out a large piece of diamond.

He carried the diamond to the king in order to sell it. He saw a crowd of noblemen in the court. Near the king and the



queen whom should he see but Chandra! He at once pushed his way through the crowd and held out the diamond to Chandra and said, "So, Chandra, you are on your way to become the queen! Surely, you are about to marry the prince. Here is my humble present on this sweet occasion!"

But there was no prince to marry Chandra. The childless royal couple had found the beautiful Chandra and, giving her parents a good deal of

money, had adopted her as their daughter. The whimsical king had thereafter announced that whoever of the young men of his kingdom could present Chandra with the most precious gift, he would win her hand in marriage.

Now, it was found that Suraj's diamond was the most precious of all the gifts Chandra had received. Before long Suraj wedded Chandra. In due course he became the king and Chandra the queen!

An elephant caught in a muddy pool is far less powerful than a jackal who is free.

—The Kural

Deep in the sea are riches beyond compare. But if you seek safety, it is on the shore.

—A Sufi saying

Do not cultivate friendship with an elephant-owner if you do not own a shed big enough to host the elephant!

—A Sufi saying



VEER HANUMAN

Rama was so much overwhelmed with sorrow that he could not understand what Vibhishana said.

"Vibhishana! Will you please explain the situation once more?" he asked.

"O Ramachandra! Please do not get upset with the appearance of things. Meghnad is now performing a rare rite. This is the time to attack and kill him. I propose that Lakshmana be entrusted with the task. If Meghnad is allowed to complete the rite, he will become invincible. That is the boon he has obtained from Brahma. But if he is killed now, our victory is certain," explained Vibhishana.

In the battle ground, the

demons were trying to keep the Vanaras engaged with sporadic attacks on them. They were under the impression that the enemy knew nothing about Meghnad's rite. With great hope they looked forward to Meghnad completing the rite and reappearing in the battlefield.

Rama lost no time in asking Lakshmana to proceed to the spot where Meghnad was practising the ritual. Veer Hanuman accompanied Lakshmana. They were led by Vibhishana whose only role at the present was to show them the way. A select band of soldiers followed them.

As they advanced, well-armed and alert, they could see a horde of demons guarding an area at the rear part of Lanka.



"You have to storm through the protective ring the demons have thrown around their prince. As soon as you spot Meghnad, you must pounce upon him. There is no time to lose," Vibhishana told Lakshmana pointing at the demons.

Getting a signal from Lakshmana, the Vanara soldiers rushed at the demons. A terrible fight ensued. Meghnad, taken aback, stood up leaving the ritual incomplete. He then got into his chariot and drove to face the Vanaras.

Meghnad's bodyguards were taken aback. They did not expect the attack. Although

they were ready with arms, they were mentally unprepared to face the enemy.

Lakshmana surveyed the area which was the site of Meghnad's ritual. It was a spot encircled by huge trees. Meghnad had kept ready some animals for sacrifice. If the invading army had been a little late, Meghnad would have surely completed his rite.

"Come on, Meghnad, I am ready. Try your strength and valour against me," Lakshmana told his adversary in a challenging tone.

Meghnad did not answer Lakshmana. Instead, he spotted Vibhishana and shouted at him, saying, "Are you not ashamed to turn a servant of the enemies of the demons and lead them here? Posterity will remember you as a mean and treacherous fellow. You could have lived among your own people gloriously. Instead, you chose to become a slave of those who are hostile towards your race and your motherland. I wonder how you are still alive. Another demon at your place would have died of shame!"

Vibhishana replied calmly but sternly, "I do not wish to speak to you harshly since you

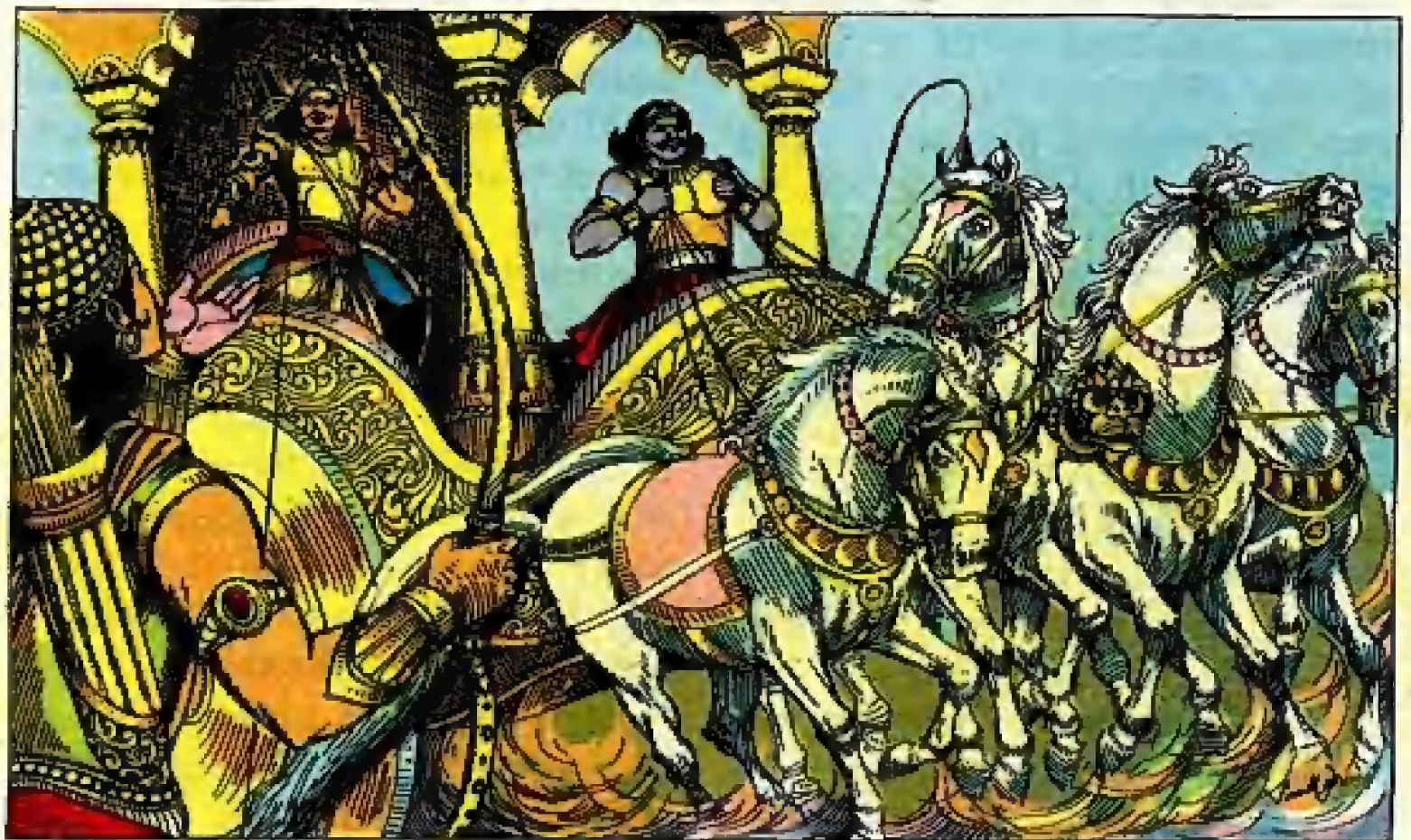
stand at the threshold of death. However, you should not forget the fact that if anybody is responsible for the ruination of Lanka, it is your father. He is a sinner of untold gravity. I have done my best to infuse good sense into him, but have failed. The consequence of his arrogant and lustful deeds are bound to visit him and all those who support him. All I have done is to desert the unjust and to support the just. I have no regrets. So far as you are concerned, it is a shame that you did not prove yourself more sensible than your father. You dragged a fake figure of Sita

Devi into the battlefield and humiliated her before all. That is crime enough for you to meet with your death. And you will now be obliged to meet death since you have fallen into the hands of Lakshmana.

Meghnad turned to Lakshmana and said angrily, "Haven't you already got some taste of my power? Have you lost your sense that you have come again to face me?"

"Well, you can very well see that I have indeed come! It is a chance for you to prove your courage, not to brag about it!" replied Lakshmana.

Instantly Meghnad dischar-





ged a covey of arrows, leaving Lakshmana bleeding. But Lakshmana answered with a fierce shower of arrows before Meghnad had moved his bow. The contest went on for a while. Vibhishana, who was keenly observing Meghnad, confided to Lakshmana, "Surely, I can mark signs of tiredness on the face of Meghnad. This is the right moment for making a final assault on him."

Lakshmana sent a series of choice arrows at his adversary. Meghnad fell sprawled on his chariot, senseless. But not for long. He sat up again and fought mustering all his vigour.

Lakshmana laughed and said "Meghnad! Do you dream of defeating me with this show of strength?" In the next moment, an arrow from Lakshmana shattered the strong protective cover on the chest of Meghnad. He was seriously wounded.

Even then he did not yield. He fought on desperately, in the process wounding Lakshmana. The demons and the Vanaras watched their fight with amazement.

Vibhishana addressed the Vanaras, saying, "Friends! Know this that Lakshmana is involved in a crucial battle. Meghnad is the last great support Ravana has. You have killed a number of demon heroes. But as long as Meghnad is alive, no loss is loss enough for Ravana. Our final victory depends on Lakshmana vanquishing Meghnad. You can see that Meghnad is being protected and encouraged by several demons. It should be your duty to fall upon these demons and to kill them or scare them away. As you know, it will be improper for me to help Lakshmana in killing Meghnad."

The Vanaras were inspired. They fought with the demons summoning great fury.

Soon Lakshmana's arrow killed Meghnad's charioteer. Meghnad took control of the vehicle himself while continuing to fight. But he looked pale. His plight encouraged the Vanaras. Four of the Vanara heroes, namely Pramadhi, Sharabha, Rabhasa and Gandhamadan, swooped down upon the four horses of Meghnad's chariot and killed them. The chariot came to a halt.

Meghnad jumped off the chariot and told the demons, "Do not despair. Continue to fight. I will soon return with a new chariot."

Escorted by his bodyguards, Meghnad retreated into the fort. But he emerged, seated on a new chariot, before long. Even Lakshmana and Vibhishana were surprised at his smartness.

Meghnad had returned not only with a new chariot, but also with new courage in his heart. For a while he fought bravely, killing a number of Vanaras.

But he could not sustain his courage for long. Lakshmana killed his new charioteer too. Another arrow from Lakshmana snapped his bow.

Meghnad picked up another bow and sent some arrows at



Vibhishana who had never attacked him. Now, angered at Meghnad's conduct, Vibhishana killed the horses of Meghnad's chariot with his mace.

Meghnad and Laskhmana entered a new phase of battle when they resorted to supernatural weapons. In this, Meghnad lost the ground to Lakshmana and soon a special arrow sent by Lakshmana, *Indrastra*, cut off his head.

Vibhishana and the Vanaras broke into wild cheers. The demons who were escorting Meghnad were mowed down by the Vanaras. Only some of them, crying and screaming,

could escape into the fort.

The Vanaras were full of praise for Lakshmana. Soon Lakshmana appeared before Rama and bowed down to him. Rama embraced him and said, "Ravana is now deprived of his last source of strength. It should not be difficult for me to put an end to him soon."

Rama then instructed Sushena to treat Lakshmana for his wounds.

The grim news of Meghnad's death reached Ravana inside the fort. He had hardly heard the news when he swooned away.

When he recovered, he sat shivering with wrath. Suddenly he stood up and declared that he had decided to kill Sita. "That will be avenging the death of Meghnad," he shouted.

Red with anger, he marched in the direction of the Asoca garden where Sita was a prisoner.

But Ravana's wife, Mandodari, and his ministers, came running to him and stopped him.

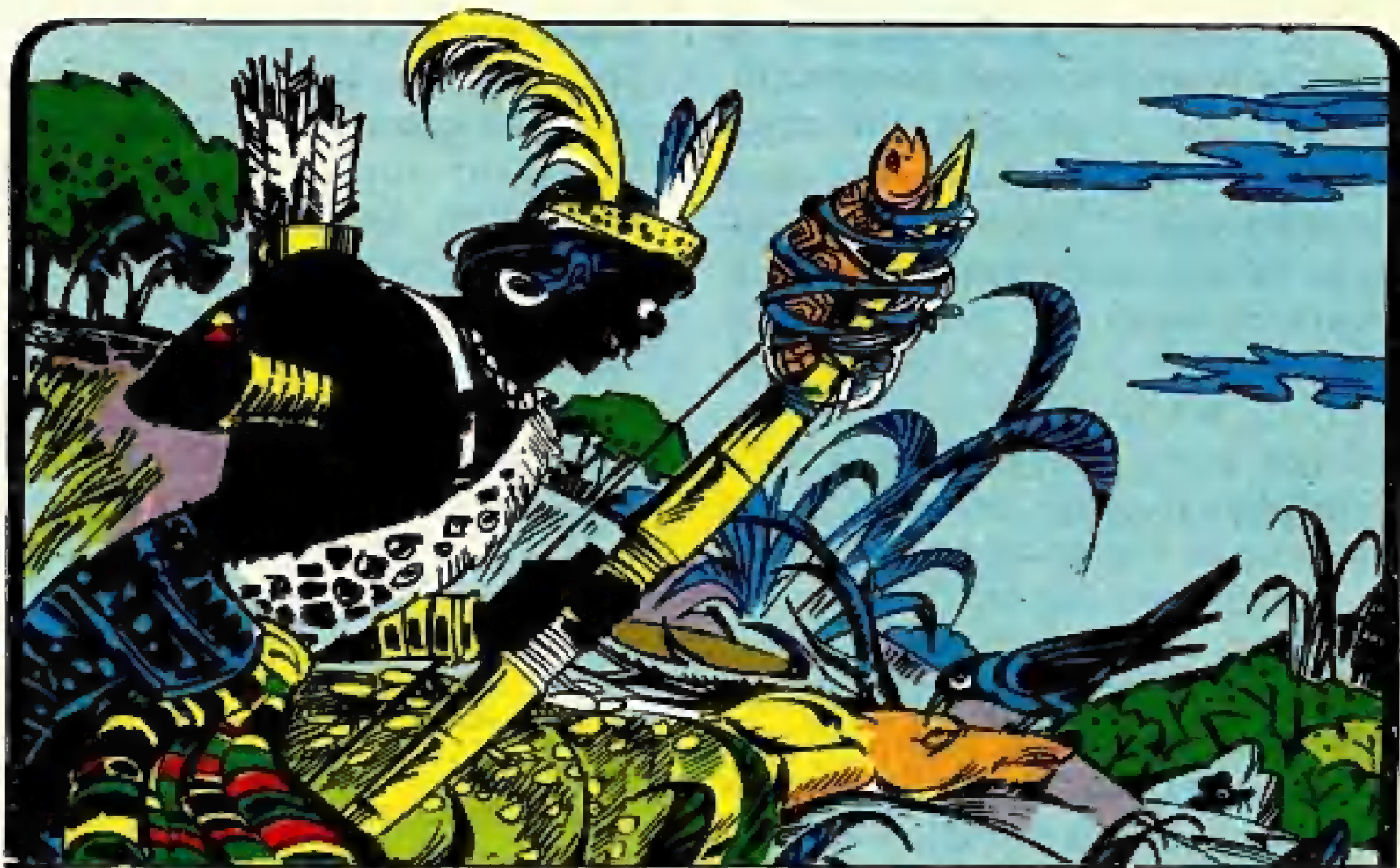
"Listen to my advice. Still there is time for you to surrender Sita to Rama and save Lanka from a total destruction," said Mandodari.

"If you are possessed by wrath, then wreak your vengeance on Rama. What has Sita done to deserve this?" said the ministers.

Ravana came to his senses. Indeed, it will be ridiculous to kill the helpless prisoner. He must face Rama—he realised.

He arranged for a *yajna*, to ensure his victory. Contd.





Tales from the Panchatantra

FRIENDS INDEED!

Upon the bank of a lake in a forest lived four friends: a deer, a crow, a tortoise and a mouse.

Once it so happened that the deer was caught in a trap which a hunter had set. The crow who first found him in that hapless condition hurried with the news to the other two friends. At the crow's advice the mouse proceeded to the spot immediately and with his sharp teeth snapped the trap and freed his

imprisoned friend. The tortoise too had arrived on the scene feeling anxious about the deer.

Soon the hunter was seen approaching. At that the deer, then free, ran away. The mouse entered a nearby hole and the crow flew up to a tree. But the poor tortoise! He could neither run nor hide. The hunter, though sorry for losing the deer, was happy to find the tortoise. He picked up the round

bony creature and tied him to his bow and walked homeward.

But the deer and the crow and the mouse soon sat in a conference. "We can't just look on while our dear friend is carried away by the hunter to his kitchen," one of them said. "No, we can't," agreed the other two. They discussed the problem in great seriousness and promptly hit upon a solution.

While passing by the lake the hunter was delighted to see a deer lying still near the water. He had no doubt that the deer was dead, for he saw a crow pecking at his eyes.

"If one deer gave me the slip, here is his cousin to gladden my heart!" mused the hunter. He kept his bow down and went near the deer.

The waiting mouse immediately set himself to making a

short work of the knot that kept the tortoise tied to the bow. And, as soon as the hunter was about to touch the deer, the crow flew away and gave out a piercing caw. The deer sprang up and giving a kick to the hunter with his hind legs, disappeared.

"Who had ever heard of a dead deer kicking a hunter!" murmured the man and, with a sigh, turned to pick up his bow with the tortoise.

The bow he picked up all right, but so far as the tortoise was concerned, he had slipped away into the water.

"Strange is the way of a tortoise!" the hunter muttered and went away, thoroughly disappointed.

The four friends came together again and lived happily.





HOW TO MAKE GOLD

Sitaram and Madhav were two well-to-do friends. But the desire to become richer and that too in an easy way—possessed them.

“Haven’t you heard of hermits creating gold out of any ordinary stuff? Only if we could come across one such man of miracle!” Madhav one day told Sitaram.

“That is a fine idea. We should be on the look out for such a man,” said Sitaram.

A few days later they saw a mendicant relaxing under a tree. The two friends approached him when nobody else was near him. “Well, *sadhuji*, do you by any chance know the art of creating gold?” they asked him.

“No! But my guru, who is a great Yogi, might know. He lives in a cave on the hill in the interior of the forest,” replied the mendicant.

The two friends proceeded into the forest and climbed the hill and met the guru. After some initial hesitation, they told the guru what had brought them there.

“Well, since I cannot speak a lie, I must admit that I know how to create gold and I can impart the secret to you. But the rule demands that you have to offer me twenty gold mohurs each in order to be eligible to learn the art,” said the yogi with a smile.

Sitaram and Madhav returned



home and sold away much of their lands. They carried the money they got to the town and changed it to gold mohurs. Then they hurried to the yogi on the hill and placed the mohurs before him.

"Fine, boys, fine! Now I will recite the *mantra* which can do the miracle. It is forbidden to write it down. You must remember it correctly," said the yogi and he recited a couplet which was a tongue-twister. Sitaram, after an hour's effort, managed to pronounce it, but not Madhav. He broke into tears and said, "O Guru, it seems I will not be able to

learn it in this life!"

"Take it easy, sonny, this means it is not in your destiny to make gold. However, whatever gold Sitaram will make today, upon his maiden venture in this field, will be yours. This is my order. And whatever gold Sitaram makes afterwards will be his. But, the *mantra* will work only once a year. Today is the first Saturday of the last month of the year. You can perform the miracle again only on this day next year," said the yogi.

At the guru's instruction, Sitaram collected pebbles and put them in a sack. The guru covered the sack with some leaves. Then he asked the two disciples to close their eyes. Sitaram then uttered the *mantra* thrice. After a while the guru asked them to open their eyes.

Glittering pieces of gold! Yes, that is what the sack was filled with when Sitaram uncovered it.

Great was their joy. Both prostrated themselves to the guru and left for their village with the sack.

True to his promise before the yogi, Sitaram gave away the sackful of gold to Madhav. Madhav buried it in his courtyard. He intended to use it for

constructing a house a year later, when his friend would create gold for himself and construct a house too.

A year passed and the auspicious day approached. The excited Sitaram could not sleep for several nights before the day finally arrived. Early in the morning he collected pebbles in a box and sat down near it, with Madhav looking on. Both closed their eyes and Sitaram recited the *mantra* thrice. His hands trembling, he then opened the box.

But there had been no change in the pebbles. Sitaram closed the box and recited the *mantra* again and again. But the pebbles continued to be pebbles.

"You must have forgotten a word or two of the *mantra*," remarked Madhav.

"How could I? Has a day

passed without my reciting it a hundred times?" answered Sitaram.

Both hurried to meet the yogi. They reached the cave only to discover a sheet of paper, not the yogi.

The writing on the paper read: "The only way to create gold is to work hard. Your labour alone can be changed into gold, not pebbles. But there is of course another way of making gold. I took that way and made forty gold mohurs—I mean by cashing in on your foolishness!"

Sitaram and Madhav sat in silence for a long time. Then they looked at each other and sighed and returned home, sad and exhausted. For many days they did not talk with anybody. They continued to sigh looking at each other.





THE PLOT THAT FAILED

Vijay Verma was an officer in the royal service of the state of Vijaypur. He was an honest and upright officer who never yielded to any pressure in matters of principle.

Other officers in the king's administration were not like him. Some took bribe regularly. Others who were not that bad would be pleased if one gave them a 'friendly gift' for the favour received. They will naturally show greater favour when the occasion came again. But Vijay was quite different.

"You should not be so strict in your conduct," some of his intimate friends warned him. "You might land yourself in danger."

"I don't care. But I strongly

believe that the Divine will protect me as long as I remain truthful," Vijay asserted.

However, the fears of his friends were not unfounded. Those who worked under Vijay were quite displeased with him because he will not allow them to take to corruption. They wanted to discredit Vijay so that he would lose his position. An officer named Subir was their leader. They raised a thousand gold coins and put the sum in a pot. Then they buried the pot in the backyard of Vijay's house.

Within hours of this, the king received a letter saying that Vijay was in the habit of collecting bribe and that he had buried his ill-earned money in his back-

yard. The king paid a surprise visit to Vijay's house and his men dug the ground specified in the letter. But all they found was a pot full to the brim with cowdung!

The king was surprised and angry. He concluded that somebody had played a practical joke on him.

The conspirators were no less surprised. What they did not know was that when they were going to bury the pot, a thief was following them. After they left Vijay's backyard, the thief stealthily entered there and emptied the pot of its gold and filled it with cowdung.

Subir, the leader of the conspirators, was not discouraged. He planned another trap for Vijay.

It was a rainy night. Two men and a woman knocked on Vijay's door. When Vijay opened the door, they humbly introduced themselves as pilgrims and said, "We are passing our night in a nearby rest house. But, as you know, such houses are not quite safe. We are carrying a bundle of ornaments with us which we intend to sell for meeting our expenses. Will you kindly keep the bundle in your custody for the night?"

Vijay was kind to them. He



took charge of the bundle.

Soon the king received an unsigned letter saying that Vijay had received a bundle of ornaments through unfair means. The king immediately ordered his sepoy's to surround Vijay's house. Experts then made a thorough search of the house. But no bundle of ornaments was found.

"I'm sorry, Vijay, but I was informed that you had just come to possess a bundle of ornaments!" said the king.

"My lord, I had. Three pilgrims had deposited the bundle with me. But two of them, a man and a woman, returned soon and took it back, saying that they had decided to leave the town tonight itself," reported Vijay.

He had hardly finished speaking when some sepoy's reached

there bringing with them a man and a woman.

"While patrolling the streets, we noticed these two persons. Their movements seemed suspicious. We detained them and found this bundle of ornaments with them," reported the sepoy's.

The man and the woman confessed that they had been hired by Subir who too was with them in disguise when they met Vijay earlier. After Subir left them to send his letter to the king, they felt tempted to take back the bundle from Vijay and escape!

Subir was immediately arrested and put behind the bars. Other officers never dared to plot against Vijay any more. Vijay's friends now told him, "You are indeed protected by the power of your honesty!"





A Folktale from France

HOW THE GREEN FOREST TURNED DESERT

Even to this day one can see a vast stretch of land lying barren along the frontier of France, what was a green forest long long ago.

How did the forest turn into a barren field? Well, it came about like this:

Once upon a time there lived an old couple in a hut on the edge of the forest. Once every week a fair was held on the other side of the forest. The old man visited the fair from time to time although he could not afford to buy many things. On one occasion all he could buy was two loaves of bread.

And as he was returning home in the evening, he could hear

some soft sound behind him. He looked back and what should he see but a huge wolf following him!

The old man shivered under his shirt. Should he begin to run? But that would only end up in the wolf pouncing upon him after a brief chase. He thought over the situation for a while and then turning to the wolf, said, "Hellow, sweet young wolf! You must be feeling hungry. See, how this tastes!" He tore a piece from a bread and threw it at the beast.

The wolf stopped to eat the piece. The old man took rapid strides towards his home. But before long the wolf caught up with him.



"It is so nice of you to give me company," the old man said again as he threw another piece of bread at the beast. The wolf stopped again to finish it and the old man began to run. But he found the wolf close behind him in no time again. He tore pieces of his bread and threw them at it again and again till only half a loaf remained in his hand when he reached home.

"I have prepared soup. We can sit down for dinner if you have brought some bread," said the old man's wife.

The old man quietly drew her attention to the wolf which

was now sitting before their door. Then he threw the remaining piece of bread at the beast and said, "Thank you, dear wolf, for your guarding me through the forest. Take this. Good-bye!"

The old woman shut the door as soon as she saw the wolf, and said, "Thank your luck that he has not eaten you up!"

They sat down for dinner—and that only meant that they sipped plain soup. Through the window the old woman peeped out and saw that the wolf was still there. With a pincer she picked up a piece of smouldering coal and hurled it at the wolf, saying, "Expecting still more bread, eh? Take it!"

The wolf took a sniff at the coal and went away.

Several months passed. The old man, with great difficulty, collected some money with which he wished to buy a cow. He paid a visit to the weekly fair, hopeful of buying a good cow.

But, to his great disappointment, he saw that the price of the cows was much higher than he had thought. He roamed about in the market for a long time. Before his eyes excellent cows were sold one after ano-

ther. When it was evening, he sighed and prepared to return home.

"Hello, old man, you want a cow, don't you? Here is one—an excellent one, in fact!" said a stranger who suddenly appeared before the old man and pushed into his hand the end of the rope with which his cow was tied.

"But, what is the price? I'm afraid, it is beyond my reach!" stammered out the old man.

"No price. This is a gift for you. Here is yet another gift, but this one is for your wife," said the stranger and he gave the old man a small casket.

"Please tell her to open it when she is alone."

The old man stood speechless for a while and then managed to say, "I don't know how to thank you for your kindness."

"You need not thank me. I am only returning your kindness. Don't you remember giving me all your bread, piece by piece, one evening? I am kind to those who are kind to me. To others I give what they deserve!" said the stranger and with a smile left the place.

The old man hurried to his home, for it was beginning to get dark. Midway he grew curious to know what the casket





contained. He stood under a tree and shook the casket. It seemed to be empty. "There must be something strange inside," he said to himself and opened it.

Next moment he threw it away with a cry, for, as soon as he opened it a yellow flame leaped out. The tree under which he stood was in flames. And, as he threw the casket away, the bushes and trees in front of him caught fire. Soon the

fire spread over the whole forest.

The old man took to another way and managed to reach home along with his cow. Behind him the whole forest was burning.

"But for my curiosity, you would have gone up in flames by now," the old man told his wife. "What business had you to throw a piece of smouldering coal at the wolf?"

The whole forest was gone. Since then the area has continued to lie barren and deserted.

This is to remind our readers that the entries they send either for the Photo-Caption Contest or the Story-Title Contest must be **per post-card alone** and not by any other means, envelope or inland letter card.

Secondly, entries for the two competitions must come separately—not by the same post-card.

We will not be surprised if our judges consider the violation of these principles as disqualifications.

—Publisher

THE UNIVERSITY OF NALANDA

At Nalanda in Bihar was situated the most famous of the ancient universities of India.

The Nalanda University complex developed around a Buddhist monastery and it attracted gifted scholars not only from all parts of India, but also from China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, Ceylon and Java. By the first half of the 7th century it had become immensely famous. That is the time when the Chinese scholar and traveller, Hieun Tsang, studied there.

The University was patronised by the Gupta emperors. Along with the scope for the study of Buddhism and other religions, the University provided facility for training in art and crafts. Three large building with invaluable manuscripts constituted its library.

90 kms away from Patna, near Rajgir, can be seen the ruins of this great institution.



A WHITE ELEPHANT

The elephant was among the prize possessions of a king. And the white elephant, which was rare, was naturally the pride of its owner.

The King of Siam was in the habit of bestowing gifts on his courtiers whenever he was pleased with any of them. But when a certain courtier received a white elephant as a royal gift, he was on the verge of bursting with joy!

But his joy did not last. To maintain an elephant - and a white elephant at that which attracted everybody's attention and appreciation - was far from easy. The courtier sold his land piece by piece in order to provide for the elephant and its keepers. And that is what the king wanted. He had been displeased with the courtier and he desired to see him ruined. The king did the same to other courtiers who incurred his displeasure.

Hence a white elephant means an honourable but onerous responsibility. The phrase may also be used to describe an unprofitable possession.





LET US KNOW

Why is the 1st of April called *ALL FOOL'S DAY*?

D. Ganesan, Kharagpur.

According to Roman mythology, Proserpina, the daughter of Ceres and Jupiter, was so beautiful that many a god would have loved to marry her. However, one day, while she was gathering flowers in the Elysian meadows, Pluto, the king of hell, kidnapped her. Proserpina cried out and her cry was heard by her mother, Ceres. She tried to find her, following the echoes of her cry. But the echoes made a fool of her. (Proserpina became the queen of hell. But that is another matter!)

This is supposed to have happened at the beginning of April. This 'fooling' of Ceres by the echoes was annually commemorated by the ancient Romans and the practice was known as *Cerealia*. Out of this practice might have developed the tradition of *All Fool's Day* on the 1st of April.

The other possibility is, in olden days, in the West, March 25 was the New Year's Day. The new year was welcomed through a festival which continued up to 1st of April, on which day, much inspired with the spirit of merrymaking, people played practical jokes on their friends.

There are several other views. But these two seem to be stronger of them of all.

What is Penelope's Web?

Anil Agnihotri, Kanpur.

Please see 'Tales behind Proverbs and Phrases' in December 1976 number of your magazine.

How did the game of cricket start?

Souvik Sen, Mysore.

Please see this page in May, 1977 number of your magazine.

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras - 600 026, to reach us by the 20th June. A reward of Rs. 25-00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the August issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the photo-caption contest.)



The absent minded professor was on his way home from the college. He hummed and smiled to himself and hardly took notice of other passers-by.

Suddenly it began to drizzle. The professor walked faster. A little later it rained lightly. He raised his upper hand in a manner which seemed rather queer to others. But that was certainly not the time to ask the professor what was the matter with his hand.

He reached home. It was only after getting on to his veranda that he looked upward and brought down his hand and with a sigh told his wife, "I forgot to bring my umbrella from the college."

"Thank God, you've at least remembered that you've forgotten the umbrella!" said his wife.

"I didn't. It was only now, when I attempted to close the umbrella that I remembered that it was not there!" said the professor shaking water off his clothes.

Result of Story Title Contest held in April Issue

The Prize is awarded to :

**Mr. D. Om Prakash, C/o: L. Deena Dayalu,
1st Appolo Street, Bishop David Nagar,
Vellore 1.**

Winning Entry — 'CHANTICLEER'

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Pranal K. Patel



Mr. M. Viswanath

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 20th JUNE
- Winning captions will be announced in AUGUST Issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to :

**PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE
MADRAS-600 026.**

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in April Issue

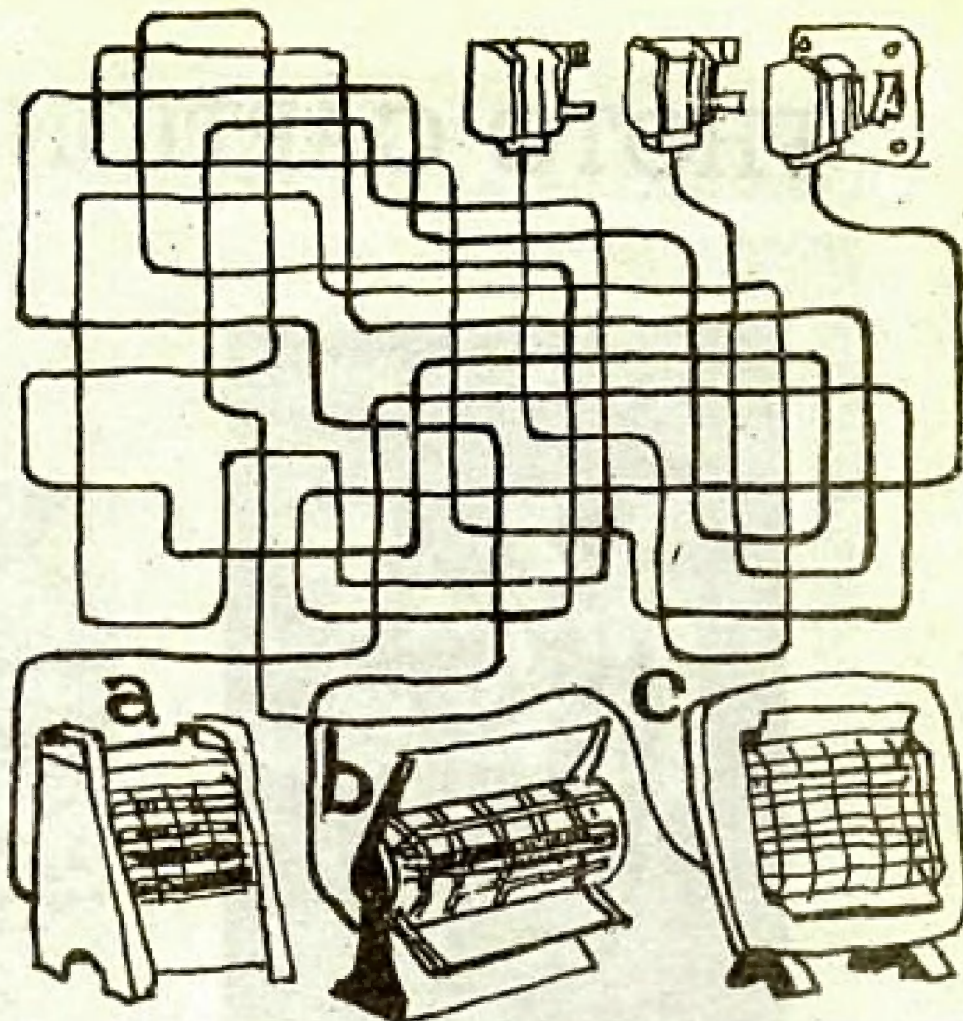
The Prize is awarded to:
Ms. Nergis B. Kalwachia,
62, Monalisa Apartments,
Bomanji Petit Road,
Bombay-36.

Winning Entry — 'Drinking with Pleasure' — Drinking by Measure

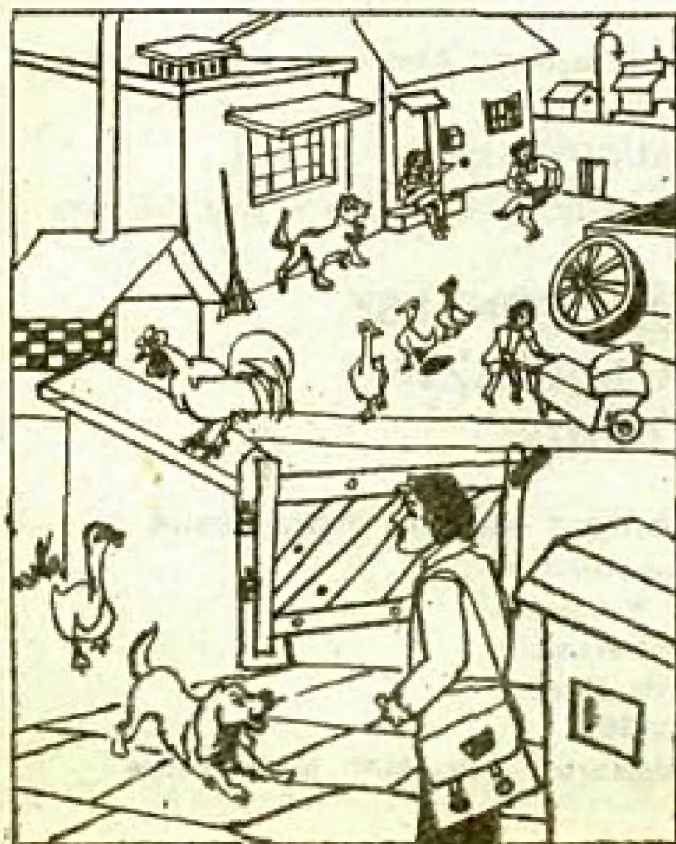
PUZZLE TIME

Only one of these three electric fires is plugged in to the power point. Can you unravel the wires to find out which one it is?

ANSWER: Fire 'B'.



SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





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Ram & Shyam and the Run-away Elephant



Attention! Grave news today,
Circus elephant's run away.



Did you
hear that Shyama?

Yes, we
must
keep calm.



Look, the
elephant!
What to do?

Ram & Shyam
are worried.
Just like you.



An idea. He will follow
our track! Feed him
all the way back.



Ram & Shyam have
saved the day! With Poppins
they did lead the way.



Hurray! Hurray! for Poppins
Sweets! The fruitiest of
fruity treats.



LICKABLE
LIKEABLE
LOVABLE



PARLE

POPPINS

FRUITY SWEETS

5 FRUITY FLAVOURS—RASPBERRY, PINEAPPLE, LEMON, ORANGE AND LIME

